MODERN
American and British
POETRY

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Poetry

ROAST LEVIATHAN
CHALLENGE
THE NEW ADAM
THESE TIMES
BURNING BUSH

Parodies

INCLUDING HORACE
— AND OTHER POETS
HEAVENS
COLLECTED PARODIES

Tales

MOSES
THE FAT OF THE CAT
AND OTHER STORIES

Essays

AMERICAN POETRY SINCE 1900
THE FORMS OF POETRY

Critical Collections

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY
MODERN BRITISH POETRY
THIS SINGING WORLD
YESTERDAY AND TODAY
POEMS OF HEINRICH HEINE

Geo. Rocklein Jr.

Modern
AMERICAN AND BRITISH
Poetry

Edited with suggestions for study by
LOUIS UNTERMEYER

REVISED AND ENLARGED

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A FOREWORD

"Modern" is, perhaps, the most misleading adjective in the dictionary. There is no term more fluctuant and elusive, that shifts its meanings with greater rapidity, that turns its back so quickly upon those ardent champions who defended it most stubbornly. The present merges so swiftly into the past that today's definition of modernity may seem, after the shortest of intervals, an apology for some safely enshrined tradition.

And yet, though one should not use hard and fast rules when measuring so fluid a thing as time, one must at least be arbitrary about the years when making an anthology. A "modern" compilation is no exception. Although it is difficult to draw a line between periods of literary activity — and particularly of poetry — the task is made somewhat easier by the advent of Walt Whitman in America and the close of the Victorian Era in England. It would have been pleasant to divide the poetry of this dual collection into groups and distinct tendencies. Unfortunately, such a scheme would give the reader a series of impressions that would be contradictory and, in the final effect, false. One cannot draw a true picture of a period in the state of flux except by showing its fluid character.

Since the chronological arrangement is, in spite of certain disadvantages, the only logical one, an arbitrary boundary has been fixed. Conceiving modern British poetry to begin after the fertile Tennyson-Browning-Rossetti-Swinburne epoch, the year 1840 is made to act as dividing-line; any poet born before that date is ruthlessly excluded. In the case of American poetry, the line has been moved back twenty years. Thus, by including work of a poet born in this country as early as 1819, a richer background has been given the poetry of our times. And, although some of the "interval" poets like Aldrich and Lanier could scarcely be considered " modern," it is curious to see how wide and how completely the circle has swung since Walt Whitman startled the world with *Leaves of Grass.*

It is a happy circumstance that this volume should begin with the poetry of Whitman and Emily Dickinson (born 1830) whose work, printed for the first time after her death, was unknown as late as 1890 and unnoticed until several years later. For their lines radiated the new spirit — free in expression, unhampered in choice of subject, keen in psychology — to which a countryful of writers has responded. No longer confined to London, Boston or New York as literary centers, the impulse to create is everywhere. There is scarcely a state, barely a township that has not produced its local laureate.

The notes preceding the poems are intended to support and amplify this geographical as well as biographical range. It is instructive as well as interesting to see what effect, if any, climate and conditions exert on the creator's expression: how much the gaunt and granite hills of New Hampshire manifest themselves in the New England soliloquies of Robert Frost, or how the noisy energy of the Middle West booms and rattles through the high-pitched syllables of Vachel Lindsay. The notes, with their brief critical as well as bibliographical data, have also been prepared on the theory that poet and person have a definite relation to each other and the enjoyment of the one is enhanced by an acquaintance with the other.

While emphasis has been placed upon the contribution of living writers, little stress has been laid upon the controversial subject of Form. It is the matter which concerns us more than the manner. *Vers libre,* that bugaboo of many critics, has produced a quantity of trivial and tiresome exhibitions. But so, the *vers librists* might well reply, has the sonnet. Any form, in the hands of the genuine artist, not only justifies but dignifies itself. Free verse (a misnomer, by the bye, for free verse instead of being " free " obeys certain well-known laws of rhythm, balance, return and cadence) is capable of many effects impossible of achievement in a strict, metrical pattern. Nor is free verse as one-dimensional as is often charged. It can be as vigorous as the unrhymed "voluntaries" of Henley or as delicately chiselled as the firm precision of H. D.'s lines. We find it in various tones and textures: rough-hewn and massive as in the gnarled solidity of Carl Sandburg, brilliantly glazed as in the enamelled pictures of Amy Lowell, biblical as in the sonorous strophes of James Oppenheim. But though *vers libre* has been the subject of much curious debate, it is only one feature of the surface resemblance as well as the wide differences of modern poets on both sides of the Atlantic. A sweeping inclusiveness distinguishes their dissimilar verse; they employ old forms and new departures with equal skill.

There is this outstanding difference between latter-day American and British poets. Broadly speaking, modern British verse is smoother, more matured and, molded by centuries of literature, richer in associations. American poetry, no longer imitative and colonial, is sharper, more vigorously experimental, provocative with youth and youth's occasional — and natural — crudities. Where the English product is formulated, precise and (in spite of a few fluctuations) true to its past, the American expression is far more varied and (being the reflection of partly indigenous and largely unassimilated ideas, temperaments and races) is characteristically uncoördinated. English poetry may be compared to a broad and luxuriating river with a series of tributaries contributing to the now thinning, now widening channel. American poetry might be described as a sudden rush of unconnected mountain torrents, valley streams and city sluices. Instead of one placidly moving body, there are a dozen rushing currents. It is as if here, in the last twenty years, submerged springs had burst through stubborn ground.

For this reason, I have included in both sections, not only the often quoted poems by those poets who are accepted everywhere as outstanding figures, but examples of lesser known singers who are also representative of their age. The same spirit has impelled me to reprint a liberal portion of that species which stands midway between light verse and authentic poetry. The Eugene Fields, the J. W. Rileys, may not occupy the same high plane as the Masefields and

Frosts, but there are few people who will not be attracted to them and thus be drawn on to deeper notes and larger themes. In the dialect verses of Paul Laurence Dunbar and T. A. Daly there is dignity beneath the humor; their very broken syllables reveal how America has become a melting-pot in a poetic as well as an ethnic sense.

With the realization that this gathering is not so much a complete summary as an introduction to modern poetry, it is hoped that the collection will move the reader to a closer inspection of the poets included. The purpose of an anthology must always be to rouse and stimulate an interest rather than to satisfy a curiosity. Such, at least, is the hope and aim of one editor.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

New York City.

Note to the Revised Edition:

Since the foregoing was written in 1922, little has happened in either America or England to change most of the conclusions contained in the preceding paragraphs. There has been, however, a rather definite return to rhyme and regular rhythms, to what may be called " formal poetry," and this revised edition reflects the waning of *vers libre* and the swing back to the more traditional patterns. Some twenty-four poets and one hundred poems have been added to the original volume, the biographical and bibliographical data have been brought sharply up-to-date, and the notes have been considerably amplified. As before, no one " school " or tendency has been emphasized at the expense of any other. It is not a group of poets but poetry itself which this volume tries to reveal.

A special recognition of understanding and assistance must be made to Olive Ely Hart of the South Philadelphia High School for Girls, several of Miss Hart's original questions and Suggestions for Study being incorporated in this revised edition.

L. U.

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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

PREFACE

THE CIVIL WAR — AND AFTER

The end of the Civil War marked the end of a literary epoch. The New England group, containing (if Poe could be added) all the great names of the antebellum period, began to disintegrate. The poets had outsung themselves; it was a time of surrender and swan-songs. Unable to respond to the new forces of political nationalism and industrial reconstruction, the Brahmins (that famous group of intellectuals who dominated literary America) withdrew into their libraries. Poets like Longfellow, Bryant, Taylor, turned their eyes away from the native scene, rhapsodized endlessly about Europe, or left creative writing altogether and occupied themselves with translations. "They had been borne into an era in which they had no part," writes Fred Lewis Pattee (*A History of American Literature Since 1870*), "and they contented themselves with reëchoings of the old music."

Suddenly the break came. America developed a national consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West. Grudgingly at first, the aristocratic leaders made way for a new expression; crude, jangling, vigorously democratic. The old order was changing with a vengeance. All the preceding writers — poets like Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes — were not only products of the New England colleges, but typically "Boston gentlemen of the early Renaissance." To them, the new men must have seemed like a regiment recruited from the ranks of vulgarity. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, John Hay, Joaquin Miller, Joel Chandler Harris, James Whitcomb Riley — these were men who had graduated from the farm, the frontier, the mine, the pilot-house, the printer's shop! For a while, the movement seemed of little consequence; the impact of Whitman and the Westerners was averted. The poets of the transition, with a deliberate art, ignored the surge of a spontaneous national expression. They were even successful in holding it back. But it was gathering force.

THE "POST-MORTEM" PERIOD

The nineteenth century, up to its last quarter, had been a period of new vistas and revolts: a period of protest and iconoclasm — the era of Shelley and Byron, the prophets of "liberty, equality and fraternity." It left no immediate heirs. In England, its successors by default were the lesser Victorians. In America, the intensity and power of men like Emerson and Whittier gave way to the pale romanticism and polite banter of the transition or, what might even more fittingly be called, the "post-mortem" poets. For these interim lyrists were frankly the singers of reaction, reminiscently digging among the bones of a long-dead past. They burrowed and borrowed, half archæologists, half artisans; impelled not so much by the need of creating poetry as the desire to write it.

From 1866 to 1880 the United States was in a chaotic and frankly materialistic condition; it was full of political scandals, panics, frauds. The moral fiber was flabby; the country was apathetic, corrupt and contented. As in all such periods of national unconcern, the artists turned from life altogether, preoccupying themselves with the by-products of art: with method and technique, with elaborate and artificial conceits, with facile ideas rather than fundamental ideals. Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Thomas Bailey Aldrich — all of these authors, in an effort to escape a reality they could not express and did not even wish to understand, fled to a more congenial realm of fantasy. They took the easiest routes to a prim and academic Arcadia, to a cloying and devitalized Orient or a mildly sensuous and romanticized Hellas. In their desperate preoccupation with lures and legends overseas, they were not, except for the accident of birth, American at all; all of them owed much more to old England than to New England.

WALT WHITMAN

Whitman, who was to influence future generations so profoundly in Europe as well as in America, had already appeared. The third edition of that stupendous volume, *Leaves of Grass*, had been printed in 1860. Almost immediately after, the publisher failed and the book passed out of public notice. But Whitman, broken in health and cheated by his exploiters, lived to see not only a seventh edition of his great work published in 1881, but a complete collection printed in his seventy-third year (1892) in which the twelve poems of the experimental first edition had grown to nearly four hundred.

The influence of Whitman can scarcely be overestimated. It has touched every shore of letters, quickened every current of art. Whitman has been acclaimed by a great and growing public, not only here but in England, Germany, Italy and France. He has been hailed as prophet, as pioneer, as rebel, as the fiery humanist and, most frequently, as liberator. In spite of the rhetorical flourish, he may well be called the Lincoln of our literature. The whole scheme of *Leaves of Grass* is inclusive; its form is elemental, dynamic, free.

Nor was it only in the relatively minor matter of form that Whitman became our great poetic emancipator. He led the way toward a wider aspect of democracy; he took his readers out of fusty, lamp-lit libraries into the sharp sunlight and the buoyant air. He was, as Burroughs wrote, preeminently the poet of vista; his work had the power "to open doors and windows, to let down bars rather than to put them up, to dissolve forms, to escape narrow boundaries, to plant the reader on a hill rather than in a corner." He could do this because, first of all, he believed implicitly in life — in its physical as well as its spiritual manifestations; he sought to grasp existence as a whole, not rejecting the things that, to other minds, had seemed trivial or tawdry. The cosmic and the commonplace were synonymous to him; he declared he was part of the most elemental, primitive things and constantly identified himself with them.

It was this breadth, this jubilant acceptance that made

Whitman so keen a lover of casual and ordinary things; he was the first of our poets to reveal " the glory of the commonplace." He transmuted, by the intensity of his emotion, material which had been hitherto regarded as too unpoetic for poetry. His long poem " Song of Myself " is an excellent example. Here his " barbaric yawp," sounded " over the roofs of the world," is softened, time and again, to express a lyric ecstasy and a vision matched only by Blake.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less that the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg
  of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre of the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow, crunching with depressed head, surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels!

It is this large naturalism, this affection for all that is homely and of the soil, that sets Whitman apart from his fellow craftsmen as our first American poet. This blend of familiarity and grandeur animates all his work. It swings with tremendous vigor through " Crossing Brooklyn Ferry "; it sharpens the sturdy rhythms (and occasional rhymes) of the " Song of the Broad-Axe "; it beats sonorously through " Drum-Taps "; it whispers immortally through the " Memories of President Lincoln " (particularly that magnificent threnody " When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed ") and lifts with a biblical solemnity in his famous " Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

Whitman did not scorn the past; no one was quicker than he to see its wealth and glories. But most of the older formulas belonged to their own era; they were foreign to our country. What was original with many transatlantic poets was being merely aped by facile and unoriginal bards in these states; concerned only with the myths of other and older countries, they were blind to the living legends of their own. In his " Song of the Exposition " Whitman not only wrote his own *credo*, he uttered the manifesto of the new generation — especially in such lines:

Come Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia.
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts;
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings;
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus. . . .
For know that a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wider, untried domain awaits, demands you.

THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST

By 1870 the public had been surfeited with sugared conceits and fine-spun delicacies. For almost twelve years, Whitman had stormed at the affectations of the period but comparatively few had listened. Yet an instinctive distaste for the prevailing superficialities had been growing, and when the West began to express itself in the raw accents of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the people turned to the new men with enthusiasm and relief. Mark Twain, a prose Whitman, revealed the romantic Mississippi and the vast Mid-West; Bret Harte, beginning a new American fiction in 1868, ushered in the wild humor and wilder poetry of California. It is still a question whether Bret Harte or John Hay first discovered the literary importance of Pike County narratives. Twain was positive that Hay was the pioneer; documentary evidence points to Harte. But it is indisputable that Harte developed — and even overdeveloped — the possibilities of his backgrounds, whereas Hay, after a few brilliant ballads, reverted to his early poetic ideals and turned to the production of polished and undistinguished verse.

To the loose swagger of the West, two other men added their diverse contributions. Edward Rowland Sill, cut short just as his work was gaining headway and strength, brought to it a gentle radicalism, a calm and cultured honesty; Joaquin Miller, rushing to the other extreme, theatricalized and exaggerated all he touched. He shouted platitudes at the top of his voice; his lines boomed with the pomposity of a brass band; floods, fires, hurricanes, extravagantly blazing sunsets, Amazonian women, the thunder of a herd of buffaloes — all were unmercifully piled on. And yet, even in its most blatant *fortissimos,* Miller's poetry occasionally captured the lavish grandeur of his surroundings, the splendor of the Sierras, the surge and spirit of the Western world.

Now that the leadership of letters had passed from the East, all parts of the country began to try their voices. The West continued to hold its tuneful supremacy; the tradition of Harte and Hay was followed (softened and sentimentalized) by Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley. In the South, Irwin Russell was pioneering in negro dialect (1875) and Sidney Lanier fashioned his intricate harmonies (1879). A few years later (in 1888) Irwin Russell brought out his faithfully rendered *Dialect Poems* and the first phase of the American renascence had passed.

REACTION AND REVOLT IN THE '90s

Reaction set in at the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The passionate urge had spent itself, and in its place there remained nothing but that minor form of art which concerns itself less with creation than with re-creation. These re-creators wrote verse that was precise, scholarly and patently reproductive of their predecessors. "In 1890," writes Percy H. Boynton, "the poetry-reading world was chiefly conscious of the passing of its leading singers for the last half-century." The poetry of this period (whether it is the hard, chiseled verse of John B. Tabb or the ornate delicacy of Richard Watson Gilder) breathes a kind of dying resignation. But those who regarded poetry chiefly as a not too energetic indoor exercise were not to rule unchallenged. Restlessness was in the air and revolt openly declared itself with the publication of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894), *More Songs from Vagabondia* (1896) and *Last Songs from Vagabondia* (1900). No one could have been more surprised at the tremendous popularity of these care-free celebrations (the first of the three collections went through seven rapid editions) than the young authors, Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman. In the very first poem, Hovey voices their manifesto:

Off with the fetters
That chafe and restrain!
Off with the chain!
Here Art and Letters,
Music and Wine
And Myrtle and Wanda,
The winsome witches,
Blithely combine.
Here is Golconda,
Here are the Indies,
Here we are free —
Free as the wind is,
Free as the sea,
Free!

The new insurgence triumphed. It was the heartiness, the gypsy jollity, the rush of high spirits that conquered. Readers of the *Vagabondia* books were captivated, though they were swept along by the speed of this poetry rather than by its philosophy.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these new apostles of outdoor vigor was, however, not as much of an accident as it seemed. On one side, the world of art, the public was wearied by barren philosophizing set to tinkling music; on the other, the world of action, it was faced by a staggering growth of materialism which it feared. Hovey, Carman and their imitators offered a swift and stirring way out. But it was neither an effectual nor a lasting escape. The war with Spain, the industrial turmoil, the growth of social consciousness and new ideas of responsibility made America look for fresh valuations, more searching songs. Hovey began to go deeper into himself and his age; in the Mid-West, William Vaughn Moody grappled with the problems of his times only to have his work cut short by death in 1910. But these two were exceptions; in the main, it was another interval — two decades of appraisal and expectancy, of pause and preparation.

INTERIM — 1890–1912

This interval of about twenty years was notable for its effort to treat the spirit of the times with a cheerful evasiveness, a humorous unconcern; its most representative craftsmen were, with four exceptions, the writers of light verse. These four exceptions were Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Markham. Both Hovey and Carman saw wider horizons and tuned their instruments to a larger music.

Moody's power was still greater. In " An Ode in Time of Hesitation," he protested against turning the " new-world victories into gain " and painted America on a majestic canvas. In " The Quarry " he celebrated America's part in preventing the breaking-up of China by the greedy empires of Europe (an act accomplished by John Hay, poet and diplomat). In " On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," a dirge wrenched from the depths of his nature, Moody cried out against our own grasping imperialists. It was the fulfilment of this earlier poem which found its fierce climax in the lengthy Ode, with lines like:

> Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
> This crown shall crown their struggle and their truth?
> Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
> Mewing its mighty youth? . . .
> . . . O ye who lead
> Take heed!
> Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

Early in 1899 the name of Edwin Markham flashed across the land when, out of San Francisco, rose the sonorous challenge of " The Man with the Hoe." This poem, which has been ecstatically called " the battle-cry of the next thousand years " (Joaquin Miller declared it contained " The whole Yosemite — the thunder, the might, the majesty "), caught up, with a prophetic vibrancy, the passion for social justice that was waiting to be intensified in poetry. Markham summed up and spiritualized the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience. In a ringing blank verse, Markham crystallized the expression of outrage, the heated ferment of the period. His was a vision of a new order, austere in beauty but deriving its lifeblood from the millions struggling in the depths.

Inspiring as these examples were, they did not generate others of their kind; the field lay fallow for more than a decade. The lull was pronounced, the gathering storm remained inaudible.

RENASCENCE — 1913

Suddenly the " new " poetry burst upon us with unexpected vigor and extraordinary variety. October, 1912, saw the first issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, a monthly that was to introduce the work of hitherto unknown poets and to herald the various groups, schools and " movements." The magazine came at the very moment before the breaking of the storm. Flashes and rumblings had already been troubling the literary heavens; a few months later — the deluge! . . . By 1917, the " new " poetry was ranked as " America's first national art "; its success was sweeping, its sales unprecedented. People who never before had read verse turned to it and found they could not only read but relish it. They discovered that for the enjoyment of poetry it was not necessary to have at their elbows a dictionary of rare words and classical references; they no longer were required to be acquainted with Latin legendry and the minor love-affairs of the major Greek divinities. Life was their glossary, not literature. The new product spoke to them in their own language. And it did more: it spoke to them of what they scarcely ever had heard expressed; it was not only closer to their soil but nearer to their souls.

ROBINSON AND MASTERS

One reason why the new poetry achieved so sudden a success was its freedom from the traditionally stilted " poetic diction." Revolting strongly against the assumption that poetry must have a vocabulary of its own, the poets of the new era spoke in the oldest and most stirring tongue; they used a language that was the language not of the poetasters but of the people. In ordinary speech they rediscovered the strength, the secret core of the commonplace.

E. A. Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct and clarifying utterance which was to become part of our present technique. As early as 1879, in *The Children of the Night,* Robinson anticipated the brief characterizations and the etched outlines of Masters's *Spoon River Anthology.* His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures were a sharp reaction to the current high valuation on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency and success at any cost.

Masters's most famous book will rank as one of the landmarks of American literature. In it, he has synthesized the small towns of the Mid-West with a background that is unmistakably local and implications that are universal. This amazing volume, in its curiosity and comprehensiveness, is a broad cross-section of whole communities. Beneath its surface tales and dramas, its condensation of grocery-store gossip, *Spoon River Anthology* is a great part of America in microcosm. The success of the volume was sensational. It was actually one of the season's " best sellers "; in a few months, it went into edition after edition. People forgot Masters's revelation of the sordid cheats and hypocrisies, in their interest at seeing their neighbors so pitilessly exposed. Yet had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly-balanced work. But the book ascends to buoyant exaltation and ends on a plane of victorious idealism. In its wide gamut, *Spoon River,* rising from its narrow origins, reaches epical proportions. Indigenous to its roots, it is stark, unflinching, unforgettable.

ROBERT FROST

The same year that brought forth *Spoon River Anthology* saw the American edition of Frost's *North of Boston.* It was evident at once that the true poet of New England had arrived. Unlike his predecessors, Frost was never a poetic provincial — never parochial in the sense that America was still a literary parish of England. He is as native as the lonely farmhouses, the dusty blueberries, the isolated people, the dried-up brooks and mountain intervales that he describes. Loving, above everything else, the beauty of the Fact, he shares, with Robinson and Masters, the determination to tell not merely the actual but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wears his rue and his realism with a difference. Where Robinson is downright and definite, Frost diverges, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters is violent and hotly scornful, Frost is reticent and quietly sympathetic. Where Robinson, in his reticent disclosures and reminiscent moods, often reflects New England, Frost *is* New England.

North of Boston is well described by the poet's own subtitle: " a book of people." In it one not only sees a countryside of people, one catches them thinking out loud, one can hear the very tones of their voices. Here we have speech so arranged and translated that the speaker is heard on the printed page; any reader will be led by the kind and color of these words into reproducing the changing accents in which they are supposed to be uttered. It is this insistence that " all poetry is the reproduction of the tones of actual speech," that gives these poems, as well as the later ones, a quickly-communicated emotional appeal.

Frost is by no means the dark naturalist that many suspect. Behind the mask of " grimness " which many of his critics have fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most somber monologues. His most concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values; through his very reticence one hears more than the voice of New England.

CARL SANDBURG

Just so, the great Mid-West, that vast region of steel mills and slaughter-houses, of cornfields and prairies, of crowded cities and empty skies, speaks through Carl Sandburg. In Sandburg, industrial America has at last found its voice: *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920) vibrate with the immense purring of dynamos, the swishing rhythms of threshing arms, the gossip and laughter of construction gangs, the gigantic and tireless energy of the modern machine. Frankly indebted to Whitman, Sandburg's poems are less sweeping but more varied; musically his lines mark a real advance. He sounds the extremes of the gamut: there are few poems in our language more violent than " To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," few lyrics as hushed and tender as " Cool Tombs."

When *Chicago Poems* first appeared, it was received with a disfavor ranging from hesitant patronization to the scornful jeers of the academicians. Sandburg was accused of verbal anarchy; of a failure to distinguish prose matter from poetic material; of uncouthness, vulgarity, of assaults on the English langauge and a score of other crimes. In the face of those who still see only a coarseness and distorted realism in Sandburg, it cannot be said too often that he is brutal only when dealing with brutal things; that his " vulgarity " springs from an immense love of life, not from a merely decorative part of it; that his bitterest invectives are the result of a healthy disgust of shams; that, behind the force of his projectile-phrases, there burns the greater flame of his pity; that the strength of his hatred is exceeded only by the mystic challenge of his love.

THE IMAGISTS AND AMY LOWELL

Sandburg established himself as the most daring user of American words — rude words ranging from the racy metaphors of the soil to the slang of the street. But even before this, the possibilities of a new vocabulary were being tested. As early as 1865, Whitman was saying, " We must have new words, new potentialities of speech — an American range of self-expression. . . . The new times, the new people need a tongue according, yes, and what is more, they will have such a tongue — will not be satisfied until it is evolved."

It is curious to think that one of the most effective agents to fulfill Whitman's prophecy and free modern poetry from its mouldering diction was that little band of preoccupied specialists, the Imagists. Ezra Pound was the first to gather the insurgents into a definite group. During the winter of 1913, he collected a number of poems illustrating the Imagist point of view and had them printed in a volume: *Des Imagistes* (1914). A little later, Pound withdrew from the clan. The rather queerly assorted group began to disintegrate and Amy Lowell, then in England, brought the best of the younger members together in three yearly anthologies (*Some Imagist Poets*) which appeared in 1915, 1916 and 1917. There were, in Miss Lowell's new grouping, three Englishmen (D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint), three Americans (H. D., John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell), and their creed, summed up in six articles of faith, was as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms — as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

It does not seem possible that these six obvious and almost platitudinous principles, which the Imagists so often neglected in their poetry, could have evoked the storm of argument and fury that broke as soon as the militant Amy Lowell began to champion them. Far from being revolutionary, these principles were not new; they were not even thought so by their sponsors. The Imagists themselves realized they were merely restating ideals which had fallen into desuetude, and declared, "They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature." And yet many conservative critics, joined by the one hundred per cent reactionaries, rushed wildly to combat these "heresies"! They forgot that, in trying to protect the future from such lawlessness as "using the exact word," from allowing "freedom in the choice of subject," from the importance of "concentration," they were actually attacking the highest traditions of their enshrined past.

The controversy succeeded in doing even more than the work of the Imagists themselves. Miss Lowell was left to carry on the battle single-handed; to defend the theories which, in practice, she was beginning to violate brilliantly. By all odds, the most energetic and unflagging experimenter, Miss Lowell's versatility became amazing. She employed Chaucerian stanzas, polyphonic prose, monologues in her native New England dialect, irregular *vers libre*, conservative couplets, echoes from the Japanese, translations from the Chinese, even primitive re-creations of Indian folk-lore!

The work of the Imagists was done. Its members began to develop themselves by themselves. They had helped to swell the tide of realistic and romantic naturalism — a tide of which their contribution was merely one wave, a high breaker that carried its impact far inshore.

THE NEW FOLK-POETRY

In a country that has not been mellowed by antiquity, that has not possessed songs for its peasantry or traditions for its singers, one cannot look for a wealth of folk stuff. In such a country — the United States, to be specific — what folk-poetry there is, has followed the path of the pioneer. At first these homely songs were merely adaptations and localized versions of English ballads and border minstrelsy, of which the "Lonesome Tunes" discovered in the Kentucky mountains by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman are excellent examples. But later, a more definitely native spirit found expression in the various sections of these states.

Everywhere today there is a revival of interest in homespun melodies and folk-created verse. John A. Lomax has published two volumes of cowboy songs — most of them anonymous — full of tang, wild fancy and robust humor. Mary Austin, Natalie Curtis Burlin and Lew Sarett are chief among those who have attempted to bring the spirit of Indian tunes and chants into our poetry. National admiration has been aroused by the Aframerican culture, as evidenced by the popularity of various collections of Negro Spirituals, "Mellows," Blues, and the work of such poets as Johnson, Cullen, Hughes. The tradition of Harte and Hay is being carried on by such racy interpreters as Harry Herbert Knibbs, Badger Clark and Edwin Ford Piper. A huge assemblage of words and music from every stratum of town, backwoods and prairie (to say nothing of barber-shops) was collected by Carl Sandburg and published in 1927 under the accurate title *The American Songbag.* But, of all contemporaries who approximate the spirit of folk-poetry, none has made more striking or more indubitably American contributions than Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.

LINDSAY AND OPPENHEIM

Lindsay is essentially a people's poet. He does not hesitate to express himself in terms of the lowest common denominator; his fingers are alternately on his pen and the public pulse. Living near enough the South to appreciate the negro, Lindsay has been tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto and, above all, by the curiously syncopated music that characterize the black man in America. In "The Congo" the words roll with the solemnity of an exhortation, dance with a grotesque fervor or snap, wink, crackle and leap with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of "ragtime." Lindsay catches the burly color and boisterous music of camp-meetings, minstrel shows, revival jubilees.

And Lindsay does more. He carries his democratic determinations further than any of his compatriots. His dream is of a great communal Art; he preaches the gospel that all villages should be centers of beauty, all its citizens, artists. At heart a missionary even more than a minstrel, Lindsay often loses himself in his own evangelism; worse, he frequently cheapens himself and caricatures his own gift by pandering to the vaudeville instinct that insists on putting a noisy "punch" into everything, regardless of taste, artistry or a sense of proportion. He is most impressive when he is least frenzied, when he is purely fantastic or when a greater theme and a finer restraint (as in "The Eagle That Is Forgotten") unite to create a preaching that does not cease to be poetry.

Something of the same blend of prophet and poet is found in the work of James Oppenheim. Oppenheim is a throwback to the ancient Hebrew singers; the music of the Psalms rolls through his lines, the fire of Isaiah kindles his spirit. This poetry, with its obvious reminders of Whitman, is biblical in its inflection, Oriental in its heat. It runs through forgotten centuries and brings buried Asia to busy America; it carries to the Western world the color of the East. In books like *War and Laughter* and *Songs for the New Age*, the race of god-breakers and god-makers speaks with a new voice. Here, with analytic intensity, the old iconoclasm and still older worship are again united.

SUMMARY—THE NEW SPIRIT

Most of the poets represented in these pages have found a fresh and vigorous material in a world of honest and often harsh reality. They respond to the spirit of their times; not only have their views changed, their vision has been widened to include things unknown to the poet of yesterday. They have learned to distinguish real beauty from mere prettiness; to wring loveliness out of squalor; to find wonder in neglected places.

And with the use of the material of everyday life, there has come a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday speech. The stilted and mouth-filling phrases have been practically discarded in favor of words that are part of our daily vocabulary. It would be hard at present to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn abbreviations as *'twixt, 'mongst, ope'*; such evidences of poor padding as *adown, did go, doth smile;* such dull rubber-stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue, roseate glow, golden hope, girlish grace, gentle breeze,* etc. The *peradventures, forsooths* and *mayhaps* have disappeared. And, as the speech of the modern poet has grown less elaborate, so have the patterns that embody it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm or any of the musical assets of the older poets, the forms have grown more flexible; the intricate versification has given way to simpler diction, direct vision and lines that reflect and suggest the tones of animated or exalted speech. The result of this has been a great gain both in sincerity and intensity; it has enabled the poet of today to put greater emphasis on his emotion rather than on the cloak that covers it.

One could go into minute particulars concerning the growth of an American spirit in our literature and point out how many of the latter-day poets have responded to native forces larger than their backgrounds. One could trace the rise of a new lyricism — especially among the women poets. Never has there been so rich an offering of songs. One could chart the progress of unsentimental love-poems from the intensities of Emily Dickinson and the simplicities of Lizette Woodworth Reese to the varied resonances of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sara Teasdale, Elinor Wylie, Elizabeth J. Coatsworth, Léonie Adams, Virginia Moore, and a score of others. Such a course would be endless and unprofitable. It is pertinent, however, to observe that, young as this nation is, it is already being supplied with the stuff of legends, ballads and even epics. The modern singer has turned to celebrate his own folk-tales. It is particularly interesting to observe how the figure of Lincoln has been treated by the best of our living poets. I have, accordingly, included six poems on this theme by six writers, each differing in manner, technique and point of view.

To those who still complain that modern poetry lacks the clear, simple beauty found in the literature of the past, it may be answered that this is a complex and experimental age. It is only when we understand part of our "new" American writing to be a literature of protest — protest against ugliness, machine-made progress, standardized "success" — that we can understand and appreciate its quality. As *The Literary Review* said, in an editorial in 1922: "We could not go on with sentimental novels and spineless lyrics forever. The artists had to refocus the instrument and look at reality again. . . . It is their task to make beauty out of it, beauty of a new kind probably, because it will accompany new truth; but they must have time. The 'new' literature deserves criticism, but it also deserves respect."

For the rest, I leave the casual reader, as well as the student, to discover the vision and healthy differences in this, one of the great poetic periods in native literature.

WALT WHITMAN

Walt Whitman was born May 31, 1819, in West Hills, Long Island ("fish-shaped Paumanok"). When he was still a child, his father left the farm which had been in the family for generations, and the Whitmans moved to Brooklyn. There, after a fitful schooling, young Whitman became a printer's apprentice. For twenty years he earned his living as printer, reporter, editorial writer, occasional critic and itinerant journalist. He even wrote a crude tract disguised as a novel. Whitman was, however, anything but the "unlettered and uncultured primitive" whom his detractors (and some of his well-meaning apologists) have pictured. He had not merely read but absorbed Shakespeare, Homer, the Bible — and the elemental surge of these can be heard in his early prose poems and in the tentative first edition of *Leaves of Grass* published in 1855.

A few American writers (notably Emerson) realized that a new force had been flung up in the Western world; in England, Swinburne and Rossetti were roused by the "buffalo strength" of this strange voice and its stranger accents. But criticism, for the most part, was as obtuse as it was adverse, and the favorites of the reading public continued to be the established group in and around Boston. Yet Whitman, undeterred by cultured jeers, feeling his foothold "tenon'd and mortis'd in granite," labored upon his magnum opus, changed titles, added entire sections, revealed, for all but careless readers, his essential artistry in the very quality of his emendations. By 1861 *Leaves of Grass* was in its third edition.

During the Civil War, Whitman served as nurse and wound-dresser — a chapter in his life which has been insufficiently stressed — and, in 1865, he was given a position in the Department of the Interior. Here a certain secretary, James Harlan, having read *Leaves of Grass* in the edition which included *Children of Adam*, conferred immortality upon himself by dismissing Whitman because of his "pernicious writing." In 1866, Whitman's *Drum-Taps* appeared, a volume that not only reflected his war experiences but contained two of the most stirring elegies ever written. Less provocative than his first "barbaric yawps," such later works as *November Boughs* (1888) and *Goodbye My Fancy* (1891) are no less rich in observation and eloquence. Whitman died attended by the faithful Horace Traubel in Camden, New Jersey, March 26, 1892.

The final estimate of Whitman's work is yet to be written. Whitman's very universality has defeated his commentators. To the craftsmen, Whitman's chief contribution is his form. Hailing him as the father of the free verse movement, they placed their emphasis on his flexible sonority, his orchestral *timbre* and tidal rhythms, his piling up of details into a symphonic structure. To the philosophers, he is the first of modern prophets; a rhapsodic mystic with a magnificently vulgar sense of democracy. To the psychologist, he is the most revealing of autobiographers. "Whoever touches this book, touches a man," he wrote, and celebrating himself — hearty, gross, noble, "sane and sensual to the core" — he celebrated humanity. (See Preface.)

The selections that follow are no more than a taste of this poet's magnitude. Whitman is most himself in the longer, panoramic poems — and one of those would far exceed the allotment for the entire group. Selection is thus doubly difficult, and in this dilemma the editor has finally decided to omit the universally known "O Captain, My Captain!" in order to make room for less familiar but even more characteristic quotations.

As I have already implied, his spirit's breadth is preëminent. It is this which has made Whitman so great an influence in Europe as well as in America, establishing him as the foremost genius which this country has yet produced. He is ample in the way that Shakespeare and Homer are ample; his range is all-inclusive, his material not dependent on time. His poetry achieves permanence because his medium is not words but elements.

FROM "SONG OF MYSELF"

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass. . . .

*

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?* . . .

And now it seems to me the beautiful, uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you, curling grass.
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men;
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them;
It may be you are from old people, and from women, and from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death. . . .
All goes onward and outward — nothing collapses.

*

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less,
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.
I know I am solid and sound,
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's curlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,
I see that the elementary laws never apologize.

I exist as I am, that is enough,
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,
And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,
I laugh at what you call dissolution,
And I know the amplitude of time.

*

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire [1] is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre [2] of the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow, crunching with depress'd head, surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels. . . .

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.

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[1] An ant.

[2] Masterpiece.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania
of owning things,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

*

Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful
boatmen.
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings. . . .
All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and
delight me;
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

*

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and
each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own
face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one
is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er
I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

*

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes).

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world. . . .

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love;
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutters' song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

FROM "CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY"

It avails not, time nor place — distance avails not, . . .
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

(*A Fragment*)

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin — I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

MIRACLES

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;

These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim — the rocks — the motion of the waves — the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly,

From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.
Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks — with a whisper,
Set open the doors O soul.

Tenderly — be not impatient,
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,
Strong is your hold O love.)

EMILY DICKINSON

Emily Dickinson, whose work is one of the most original contributions to recent poetry, was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. She was a physical as well as a spiritual hermit, actually spending most of her life without setting foot beyond her doorstep. She wrote her short, introspective verses without thought of publication, and it was not until 1890, four years after her death, that the first volume of her posthumous poetry appeared with an introduction by Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

"She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends," writes Higginson, "and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems." Yet she wrote almost five hundred of these direct and spontaneous illuminations, sending many of them in letters to friends, or (written on chance slips of paper and delivered without further comment) to her sister Sue. Slowly the peculiar, flame-like quality of her thought won a widening circle of readers; *Poems* (1890) was followed by *Poems — Second Series* (1890) and *Poems — Third Series* (1896), the contents being collected and edited by her two friends, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Several years later, a further generous volume was assembled by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, entitled *The Single Hound* (1914).

Although her chief poems were published in the 'Nineties and although the recent revival of interest in poetry drew attention to the decided individuality of Emily Dickinson's expression, her readers remained few. An occasional article appeared, showing her "lack of control" or, beneath a cover of condescension, ridiculing her "hit-or-miss grammar, sterile rhythms, and appalling rhymes." Her audience grew but gradually. Suddenly, without warning, she leaped into international prominence. Almost forty years after her death, her name was everywhere. The year 1924 saw the publication of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's important volume, *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, the first collected *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* and the first English compilation, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited with a splendid prefatory essay by Conrad Aiken.

The enthusiasm attending the triple appearance was unbounded. Martin Armstrong, the English poet, said in a review, "Mr. Aiken calls Emily Dickinson's poetry 'perhaps the finest by a woman in the English language.' I quarrel only with his 'perhaps.'" Nor were the other comments less definite. "A feminine Blake," "an epigrammatic Walt Whitman," "a New England mystic," were a few of the characterizations fastened upon her. Other appraisals sought to "interpret" her verses in the light of the "mystery" of her life. It is no secret that Emily Dickinson fell in love with a man already married, that she renounced her love, and withdrew from the world. But "The Amherst Nun" would have repudiated the analysts as vigorously as she, whose verses and letters brim with mischievous fancy, would have laughed at the grandiose epithets.

That her work will last longer than the work of the majority of her — or our — generation is, I think, indubitable. That it is sometimes erratic, half-done and, thrown off with no thought of publication, in need of the finisher's file is also, I believe, self-evident. But, in the greater number of the poems, the leap of thought is so daring, the gaps so thrilling, that moments which in a lesser spirit would have turned to merely audacious conceits, become flashes of revelation. She wrote chiefly of four things: Love, Nature, Life, Death. But what immensities were sounded within this gamut!

In 1884 she was stricken, like her father before her, with Bright's disease. Two years later, on May 16, 1886, this woman with "the soul of a monk of the Middle Ages bound up in the flesh of a Puritan" died, after a life bare of outward adventure, at Amherst. Few were present at the funeral; fewer still dreamed that she would outlive the obituary in the *Springfield Republican*. Today her place in literature is secure; her work is definitely

Of the colossal substance
Of immortality.

CHARTLESS

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet I know how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June, —
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that can not cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

SUSPENSE

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door.

A CEMETERY

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

BECLOUDED

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow

Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

PEDIGREE

The pedigree of honey
  Does not concern the bee;
A clover, any time, to him
  Is aristocracy.

BEAUTY AND TRUTH

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
" For beauty," I replied.
" And I for truth, — the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

MYSTERIES

The murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
'Twere easier to die
Than tell.

The red upon the hill
Taketh away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

PRECIOUS WORDS

He ate and drank the precious words.
His spirit grew robust;
He knew no more that he was poor,
Nor that his frame was dust.
He danced along the dingy days,
And this bequest of wings
Was but a book. What liberty
A loosened spirit brings!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was born in 1836 at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he spent most of the sixteen years which he has recorded in that delightful memoir, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869). From 1855 to 1866 he held various journalistic positions, associating himself with the leading metropolitan *literati*. A few years later he became editor of the famous *Atlantic Monthly*, holding that position from 1881 to 1890. He died in 1907.

Aldrich's work falls into two sharply-divided classes. The first half is full of overloaded phrase-making, fervid extravagances. The reader sinks beneath clouds of damask, azure, emerald, pearl and gold; he is drowned in a sea of musk, aloes, tiger-lilies, spice, soft music, orchids, attar-breathing dusks.

The second phase of Aldrich's art is more human in appeal as it is surer in artistry. "In the little steel engravings that are the best expressions of his peculiar talent," writes Percy H. Boynton, "there is a fine simplicity; but it is the simplicity of an accomplished woman of the world rather than of a village maid." Although Aldrich bitterly resented the charge that he was a maker of tiny perfections, a carver of cherry-stones, those poems of his which have the best chance of permanence are the short lyrics and a few of the sonnets, exquisite in design.

MEMORY

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour —
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May —
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

"ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME"

Enamored architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says.
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish — take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

John Hay was born at Salem, Indiana, in 1838, graduated from Brown University in 1858 and was admitted to the Illinois bar a few years later. He became private secretary to Lincoln, then major and assistant adjutant-general under General Gilmore, then secretary of legation at Paris, *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna and secretary of legation at Madrid.

His few vivid *Pike County Ballads* came more as a happy accident than as a deliberate creative effort. When Hay returned from Spain in 1870, bringing with him his *Castilian Days*, he had visions of becoming an orthodox lyric poet. But he found everyone reading Bret Harte's short stories and the new expression of the rude West. (See Preface.) He speculated upon the possibility of doing something similar, translating the characters into poetry. The result was the six racy ballads in a vein utterly different from everything Hay wrote before or after.

Hay was in politics all the later part of his life, ranking as one of the most brilliant Secretaries of State the country has ever had. He died in 1905.

JIM BLUDSO

Of the Prairie Belle

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
  Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
  Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
  That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
  The night of the Prairie Belle?

He warn't no saint, — them engineers
  Is all pretty much alike, —
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
  And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
  And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied, —
  I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had:
 To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
 To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
 A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
 Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip.
 And her day come at last, —
The Movastar was a better boat,
 But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she came tearin' along that night —
 The oldest craft on the line —
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
 And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clar'd the bar,
 And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned and made
 For that willer-bank on the right.
Thar was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out,
 Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
 Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
 Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
 And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
 Afore the smokestacks fell, —
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
 In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He warn't no saint, — but at jedgement
 I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
 That wouldn't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a goin' to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

BRET HARTE

(Francis) Bret Harte was born August 25, 1839, at Albany, New York. His childhood was spent in various cities of the East. Late in 1853, his widowed mother went to California with a party of relatives, and two months later, when he was fifteen, Bret Harte and his sister followed.

Harte's fame came suddenly. Late in the sixties, he had written a burlesque in rhyme of two Western gamblers trying to fleece a guileless Chinaman who claimed to know nothing about cards but who, it turned out, was scarcely as innocent as he appeared. Harte, in the midst of writing serious poetry, had put the verses aside as too crude and trifling for publication. Some time later, just as *The Overland Monthly* was going to press, it was discovered that the form was one page short. Having nothing else on hand, Harte had these rhymes set up. Instead of passing unnoticed, the poem was quoted everywhere; it swept the West and captivated the East. When his volume *The Luck of Roaring Camp* followed, Harte became not only a national but an international figure.

East and West Poems appeared in 1871; in 1872 Harte published an enlarged *Poetical Works* including many earlier pieces. His scores of short stories represent Harte at his best; "M'liss," "Tennessee's Partner," "The Outcast of Poker Flat" — these are the work of a lesser, transplanted Dickens.

In 1872 Harte, encouraged by his success, returned to his native East; in 1878 he went to Germany as consul. Two years later he was transferred to Scotland and, after five years there, went to London, where he remained the rest of his life. Harte's later period remains mysteriously shrouded. He never came back to America, not even for a visit; he separated himself from all the most intimate associations of his early life. He died, suddenly, at Camberley, England, May 6, 1902.

"JIM"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
  Might know Jim Wild?
Well, — no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
  In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
  Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
  Down from up yar,
Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew, —
  Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
  That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
  Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim, —
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes; —
Well, that is strange:
  Why, it's two year
  Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
    Eh?
The h—— you say!
    Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
  It wouldn't take
  D——d much to break
You and your bar.

Dead!
Poor — little — Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben, —
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar — Good-bye.
No more, sir — I —
Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it! — sho! —
No? Yes! By Joe!
Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb,
You ornery,
  Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(*Table Mountain, 1870*)

Which I wish to remark
  And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
  And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
  Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
  And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
  What that name might imply;
But his smile, it was pensive and childlike,
  As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
  And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
  That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
  And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
  And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
  He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
  With a smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
  In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
  At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
  And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
  By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
  Were quite frightful to see, —
Till at last he put down a right bower,
  Which the same Nye had dealt unto me!

Then I looked up at Nye,
  And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
  And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor," —
  And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
  I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
  Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
  In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
  He had twenty-four packs, —
Which was coming it strong,
  Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
  What is frequent in tapers, — that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
  And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
  And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar, —
  Which the same I am free to maintain.

JOAQUIN MILLER

Cincinnatus (Heine) Miller, or, to give him the name he adopted, Joaquin Miller, was born in 1841 of immigrant parents. As he himself writes, "My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio."

At fifteen we find Miller living with the Indians as one of them; in 1859 (at the age of eighteen) he attends a mission-school "college" in Eugene, Oregon; between 1860 and 1865 he is express-messenger, editor of a pacifist newspaper that is suppressed for opposing the Civil War, lawyer and, occasionally, a poet. He holds a minor judgeship from 1866 to 1870.

His first book (*Specimens*) appears in 1868, his second (*Joaquin et al.*, from which he took his name) in 1869. No response — not even from "the bards of San Francisco Bay" to whom he has dedicated the latter volume. He is chagrined, discouraged, angry. He shakes the dust of America from his feet; goes to London; publishes a volume (*Pacific Poems*) at his own expense and — overnight — becomes a sensation!

His dramatic success in England is easily explained. He brought to the calm air of literary London a breath of the great winds of the plain. The more he exaggerated his crashing effects, the better the English public liked it. When he entered Victorian parlors in his velvet jacket, hip-boots and flowing hair, childhood visions of the "wild and woolly Westerner" were realized and the very bombast of his work was glorified as "typically American."

From 1872 to 1886, Miller traveled about the Continent. In 1887 he returned to California, dwelling on the Heights, helping to found an experimental Greek academy for aspiring writers. He died there, after a determinedly picturesque life in sight of the Golden Gate, in 1913.

BY THE PACIFIC OCEAN[1]

Here room and kingly silence keep
Companionship in state austere;
The dignity of death is here,
The large, lone vastness of the deep.
Here toil has pitched his camp to rest:
The west is banked against the west.

Above yon gleaming skies of gold
One lone imperial peak is seen;
While gathered at his feet in green
Ten thousand foresters are told.
And all so still! so still the air
That duty drops the web of care.

Beneath the sunset's golden sheaves
The awful deep walks with the deep,
Where silent sea-doves slip and sweep,
And commerce keeps her loom and weaves.
The dead red men refuse to rest;
Their ghosts illume my lurid West.

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[1] Permission to reprint this poem of Joaquin Miller was granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, publishers of *Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.*

FROM "BYRON"[1]

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

COLUMBUS[1]

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
  Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
  Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
  For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?"
  "Why, say 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
  My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
  Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
  If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
  'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
  Until at last the blanched mate said,
"Why, now not even God would know
  Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
  For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say" —
  He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

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[1] Permission to reprint this poem granted by Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, publishers of *Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.*

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
 "This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
 With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
 What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
 "Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
 And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck —
 A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
 It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
 Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841. In 1861 he was graduated from Yale and shortly thereafter his poor health compelled him West. After various unsuccessful experiments, he drifted into teaching, first in the high schools in Ohio, later in the English department of the University of California.

The Hermitage, his first volume, was published in 1867, a later edition (including later poems) appearing in 1889. His two posthumous books are *Poems* (1887) and *Hermione and Other Poems* (1899).

Sill died, after bringing something of the Eastern culture to the West, in 1887.

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.

A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing — ! " he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

SIDNEY LANIER

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His was a family of musicians (Lanier himself was a skilful performer on various instruments), and it is not surprising that his verse emphasizes — even overstresses — the influence of music on poetry. He attended Oglethorpe College, graduating at the age of eighteen (1860), and, a year later, volunteered as a private in the Confederate army. After several months' imprisonment (he had been captured while acting as signal officer on a blockade-runner), Lanier was released in February, 1865.

After studying and abandoning the practice of law, he became a flute-player in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in 1873 in Baltimore, where he had free access to the music and literature he craved. Here he wrote all of his best poetry. In 1879, he was made lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University, and it was for his courses there that he wrote his chief prose work, a brilliant if not conclusive study, *The Science of English Verse*. Besides his poetry, he wrote several books for boys, the two most popular being *The Boy's Froissart* (1878) and *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880).

Lanier ranks high among our minor poets. Such a vigorous ballad as "The Song of the Chattahoochee," lyrics like "The Stirrup Cup" and parts of the symphonic "Hymns of the Marshes" are sure of a place in American literature.

Lanier died, a victim of tuberculosis, in the mountains of North Carolina, September 7, 1881.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE[1]

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

---

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier.* Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publisher.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
— Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst —
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

FROM "THE MARSHES OF GLYNN"[1]

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:

---

[1] From *Poems of Sidney Lanier*. Copyright 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

CHARLES EDWARD CARRYL

Charles Edward Carryl, father of the gifted Guy Wetmore Carryl (see page 121), was born in New York City, December 30, 1842. He was an officer and director in various railroads but found leisure to write two of the few worthy rivals of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland*. These two, *Davy and the Goblin* (1884), and *The Admiral's Caravan* (1891), contain many lively and diverting ballads as well as inspired nonsense verses in the manner of his famous model.

C. E. Carryl lived the greater part of his life in New York but, on retiring from business, removed to Boston and lived there until his death, which occurred in the summer of 1920.

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study, —
For the Goat is very clever at a sum, —
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

James Whitcomb Riley, who was possibly the most widely read native poet of his day, was born October 7, 1849, in Greenfield, Indiana, a small town twenty miles from Indianapolis, where he spent his later years. Contrary to the popular belief, Riley was not, as many have gathered from his bucolic dialect poems, a struggling child of the soil. His father was a lawyer in comfortable circumstances and Riley was not only given a good education but was prepared for the law. However, his temperament was restless; it made him try sign-painting, circus advertising, journalism.

In 1882, when he was on the staff of the Indianapolis *Journal*, he began the series of dialect poems which he claimed were by a rude and unlettered farmer, one "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet" — printing long extracts from "Johnson's" ungrammatical and badly-spelt letters to prove his find. A collection of these rustic verses appeared, in 1883, as *The Ole Swimmin' Hole;* and Riley leaped into widespread popularity. Other collections followed rapidly: *Afterwhiles* (1887), *Old-Fashioned Roses* (1888). *Rhymes of Childhood* (1890). All met an instant response; Riley endeared himself, by his homely idiom and his ingenuity, to a countryful of readers, adolescent and adult.

Riley's simplicity is not always as artless as it seems. Time and again, one can see him trading wantonly on the emotions of his unsophisticated readers. He sees them about to smile — and broadens the point of his joke; he observes them on the point of tears —

and pulls out the sobbing *tremolo* stop. He is the poet of sentiment rather than of convictions, of philosophies that never disturb his readers, of sweet truisms rather than searching truths.

That work of his which may endure will survive because of the personal flavor that Riley often poured into it. Such poems as "When the Frost is on the Punkin" and "The Raggedy Man" are a part of American folk literature; "Little Orphant Annie" is read wherever there is a schoolhouse or, for that matter, a nursery.

Riley died in his little house in Lockerbie Street, Indianapolis, July 22, 1916.

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"[1]

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens.
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here —
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days

---

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock —
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries — kind o' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below — the clover overhead! —
O, it sets my heart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is
through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and
sausage too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it — but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around
on *me* —
I'd want to 'commodate 'em — all the whole-indurin'
flock —
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

A PARTING GUEST[1]

What delightful hosts are they —
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.

---

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks. — So fine a time! Good night."

EUGENE FIELD

Although born (September 3, 1850) in St. Louis, Missouri, Eugene Field belongs to the literature of the far West. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region claimed him as their own and Field never repudiated the allegiance; he even called most of his poetry "Western Verse."

Field's area of education embraced New England, Missouri, and what European territory he could cover in six months. At twenty-three he became a reporter on the St. Louis *Evening Journal*, the rest of his life being given to journalism.

Though Field may be overrated in some quarters, there is little doubt that certain of his child lyrics, his homely philosophic ballads (in the vein which Harte and Riley popularized) and his brilliant burlesques will occupy a niche in American letters. Readers of all tastes will find much to delight them in the complete one-volume edition of his verse which was issued in 1910.

Field died in Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 1895.

LITTLE BOY BLUE[1]

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"

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[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue —
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

SEEIN' THINGS[1]

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!
I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' sung an' when my prayers are said,
Mother tells me "Happy Dreams" an' takes away the light.
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin' round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're white —
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

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[1] Reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me — *so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite —
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.
An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to — but I do not pass my plate f'r them things twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Then I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

EDWIN MARKHAM

Edwin Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, April 23, 1852, the youngest son of pioneer parents. His father died before the boy reached his fifth year and in 1857 he was taken by his mother to a wild valley in the Suisun Hills in central California. Here he grew to young manhood; farming, broncho-riding, laboring on a cattle ranch, educating himself in the primitive country schools and supplementing his studies with whatever books he could procure.

In 1899, a new force surged through him; a sense of outrage at the inequality of human struggle voiced itself in the sweeping and sonorous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." (See Preface.) Inspired by Millet's painting, Markham made the bowed, broken French peasant a symbol of the poverty-stricken toiler in all lands — his was a protest not against labor but the drudgery, the soul-destroying exploitation of labor.

The success of the poem upon its appearance in the San Francisco

Examiner (January 15, 1899) was instantaneous and universal. Soon it appeared in every part of the globe; it was quoted and copied in every walk of life, in the literary world, the leisure world, the labor world. It was incorporated in Markham's first volume *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (1899).

The same passion that fired Markham to champion the great common workers equipped him to write fittingly of the Great Commoner in *Lincoln, and Other Poems* (1901). In 1928, he published *The Book of Poetry*, an assemblage of eight hundred poets of all times and countries; two crammed volumes which he is said to have been collecting, compiling and studying for, sixty years.

Markham came East in 1901, making his home on Staten Island, New York.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE[1]

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this —
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed —
More filled with signs and portents for the soul —
More packt with danger to the universe.

---

[1] Revised version, 1920. Copyright by Edwin Markham.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —
With those who shaped him to the thing he is —
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,
  And meet them ever alike:
When you are the anvil, bear —
  When you are the hammer, strike.

BROTHERHOOD

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood;
For it will bring again to Earth
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it come, we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.
Come, clear the way, then, clear the way;
Blind creeds and kings have had their day;
Break the dead branches from the path;
Our hope is in the aftermath —
Our hope is in heroic men
Star-led to build the world again.
Make way for Brotherhood — make way for Man!

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE[1]

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road —
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of mystic powers,
Moving — all husht — behind the mortal vail.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;

[1] See pages 106, 113, 167, 171, 174, 202.

The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind —
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve —
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place —
Held the long purpose like a growing tree —
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Lizette Woodworth Reese was born January 9, 1856, near Baltimore, Maryland, where she has lived ever since. After an education obtained chiefly in private schools, she taught English in the Western High School at Baltimore. After many years of service, she retired in 1921. In 1923 the alumni of the High School where she had taught more than a score of years presented the school with a bronze tablet inscribed with her sonnet "Tears" which had become one of the most famous of American poems.

A Handful of Lavender (1891), *A Quiet Road* (1896) and *A Wayside Lute* (1909) establish an artistry which, for all its seemingly old-fashioned elegance, is as spontaneous as it is skillful. Here are no verbal tricks, no false postures; here are the qualities which are never dependent on literary fashion. "This poetry of hers," writes Mary Colum, "will persist, not because the author was cleverer or more original than other writers, but because in some way her nerves were more subtle in response to the kinds of life and experiences that came her way."

From 1909 to 1920 there was a silence. During these ten years, Miss Reese wrote little, and published less. Suddenly her work appeared again, keener and more concise than ever. *Spicewood* was published in 1920, *Wild Cherry* in 1923. Both volumes, as well as the still more recent verses in her *Selected Poems* (1926) are full of the same things which have always held Miss Reese. Again and again she writes of lilacs in Old York Lane, of thorn trees and blackberry rain, of judas-blossoms and daffodils, of Spring ecstasy and lost love, of a dead lady in her garden and Mary at the manger. But there is always something personal, always something which makes the very repetitions take on a light which is both fresh and clear. At least a dozen of her brief songs and lyrical sonnets will find a life beyond the fashions of the day.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years —
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street, —
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

SPICEWOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
That whips it all before, and all behind,
Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
It is the first, the homeliest thing of all —
At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs —
A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass,
To the white riot of the cherry tree,
Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

A FLOWER OF MULLEIN

I am too near, too clear a thing for you,
A flower of mullein in a crack of wall,
The villagers half see, or not at all;
Part of the weather, like the wind or dew.
You love to pluck the different, and find
Stuff for your joy in cloudy loveliness;
You love to fumble at a door, and guess
At some strange happening that may wait behind.
Yet life is full of tricks, and it is plain,
That men drift back to some worn field or roof,
To grip at comfort in a room, a stair;

To warm themselves at some flower down a lane:
You, too, may long, grown tired of the aloof,
For the sweet surety of the common air.

WILD CHERRY

Why make your lodging here in this spent lane,
Where but an old man, with his sheep each day,
Twice through the forgotten grass goes by your way,
Half sees you there, and not once looks again?
For you are of the very ribs of spring,
And should have many lovers, who have none.
In silver cloaks, in hushed troops down the sun
Should they draw near, oh, strange and lovely thing!
Beauty has no set weather, no sure place;
Her careful pageantries are here as there,
With nothing lost. And soon, some lad may start —
A strayed Mayer in this unremembered space —
At your tall white, and know you very fair,
Let all else go to roof within your heart.

OWNERSHIP

Love not a loveliness too much,
For it may turn and clutch you so,
That you be less than any serf,
And at its nodding go.

Be master; otherwise you grow
Too small, too humble, like to one
Long dispossessed, who stares through tears
At his lost house across the sun.

Wild carrot in an old field here,
Or steeple choked with music there,
Possess, as part of what is yours;
Thus prove yourself the heir.

Your barony is sky and land,
From morning's start to the night's close;
Bend to your need Orion's hounds,
Or the small fagot of a rose.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

Frank Dempster Sherman was born at Peekskill, New York, May 6, 1860. He entered Columbia University in 1879, where, after graduation and a subsequent instructorship, he was made adjunct professor in 1891 and Professor of Graphics in 1904. He held the latter position until his death, which occurred September 19, 1916.

Sherman never wearied of the little lyric; even the titles of his volumes are instances of his fondness for the brief melody, the sudden snatch of song: *Madrigals and Catches* (1887), *Lyrics for a Lute* (1890), *Little-Folk Lyrics* (1892), *Lyrics of Joy* (1904). A sumptuous collected edition of his poems was published, with an Introduction by Clinton Scollard, in 1917.

AT MIDNIGHT

See, yonder, the belfry tower
  That gleams in the moon's pale light —
Or is it a ghostly flower
  That dreams in the silent night?

I listen and hear the chime
  Go quavering over the town,
And out of this flower of Time
  Twelve petals are wafted down.

BACCHUS

Listen to the tawny thief,
Hid beneath the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast

Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled:
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who, — who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden-belted coat;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up?

Bacchus 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men;
Garlanded and gaily dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise, —
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose!

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

Louise Imogen Guiney was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1861. Although she attended Elmhurst Academy in Providence, most of her studying was with private tutors. In 1901 she went to England, where she lived until her death.

Traditional in form and feeling, Miss Guiney's work has a distinctly personal vigor; even her earliest collections, *Songs at the Start* (1884) and *The White Sail and Other Poems* (1887), are not without individuality. Her two most characteristic volumes are *A Roadside Harp* (1893) and *Patrins* (1897). A more recent publication, *Happy Ending*, appeared in 1909.

Though a great part of her work is poeticizing rather than poetry, there is no mistaking the high seriousness of her aim. Responding to the influence of the Cavalier Poets whom she greatly admired, her best lines vibrate with a pulsing vigor, an almost galloping courage. Aware of the nobility of the poet's mission, she held her pen "in trust to Art, not serving shame or lust"; a militant faith is the very keynote of her writing.

Miss Guiney died at Chipping-Campden, near Oxford, England, November 3, 1920.

THE WILD RIDE

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

(William) Bliss Carman was born at Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, April 15, 1861, of a long line of United Empire Loyalists who withdrew from Connecticut at the time of the Revolutionary War. Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick (1879–81), at Edinburgh (1882–83) and Harvard (1886–88). He took up his residence in the United States about 1889 and, with the exception of short sojourns in the Maritime Provinces, has lived there ever since.

In 1893, Carman issued his first book, *Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics.* It was immediately successful, running quickly into a second edition. A vivid buoyancy, new to American literature, made his worship of Nature frankly pagan as contrasted to the moralizing tributes of most of his predecessors. This freshness and irresponsible whimsy made Carman the natural collaborator for Richard Hovey, and when their first joint *Songs from Vagabondia* appeared in 1894, Carman's fame was established. (See Preface.)

Although the three *Vagabondia* collections contain Carman's best-known poems, several of his other volumes (he has published almost twenty of them) vibrate with the same glowing pulse. An almost physical radiance rises from *Ballads of Lost Haven* (1897), *From the Book of Myths* (1902) and *Songs of the Sea Children* (1904).

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood —
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a fogy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize today.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
" Such folly must surely fail! "
And when he was done, " Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail? "

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

RICHARD HOVEY

Richard Hovey was born in 1864 at Normal, Illinois, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1885. After leaving college, he became, in rapid succession, a theologian, an actor, a journalist, a lecturer, a professor of English literature at Barnard, a poet and a dramatist.

His exuberant virility found its outlet in the series of poems published in collaboration with Bliss Carman — the three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894, 1896, 1900). Here he let himself go completely; nothing remained sober or static. His lines fling themselves across the page; shout with a wild irresponsibility; leap, laugh, carouse and carry off the reader in a gale of high spirits.

"At the Crossroads" is a vivid example of this gipsy-like spirit which could (as in "Unmanifest Destiny," written on the outbreak of the Spanish-American War) sound deeper notes with equal strength. The famous "Stein Song" is but an interlude in the midst of a far finer poem that, with its flavor of Whitman, begins:

I said in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,
Lone and high,
And the slow clouds go by.
I will get me away to the waters that glass
The clouds as they pass. . . ."

Although the varied lyrics in *Songs from Vagabondia* are the best-known examples of Hovey, a more representative collection of his riper work may be found in *Along the Trail* (1898). Hovey was slow to mature; this volume, in conjunction with the uncompleted *Taliesin: A Masque*, shows his later, more intensive power. The mood reflected is spiritual rather than physical; the note is high but never shrill. Besides the later work, *Along the Trail* contains "Spring" as well as the best of his vivid fragments.

Hovey died, during his thirty-sixth year, in New York, February 24, 1900.

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever —
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under —
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

UNMANIFEST DESTINY[1]

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach,
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,

---

[1] The phrase "manifest destiny," which came into ordinary usage during the Spanish-American War, was meant to indicate America's paternal (or, as the opposing faction claimed, imperialistic) mission. Hovey was among those who indignantly denied any but unselfish motives to the aims of his country.

The slave's emancipated feet
Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
My country, serves It's dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

A STEIN SONG

(*From "Spring"*)

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare:
And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

William Vaughn Moody was born at Spencer, Indiana, July 1, 1869, and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life in travel and intensive study — he taught, for eight years, at the University of Chicago — his death coming at the very height of his creative power.

The Masque of Judgment, his first work, was published in 1900. A richer and more representative collection appeared the year following; in *Poems* (1901) Moody effected that mingling of challenging lyricism and spiritual philosophy which becomes more and more insistent. (See Preface.) Throughout his career, particularly in such lines as the hotly expostulating "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," Moody successfully achieves the rare union of poet and preacher. A complete edition of *The Poems and Poetic Dramas of William Vaughn Moody* was published in 1912 in two volumes.

In the summer of 1909 Moody was stricken with the illness from which he never recovered. He died in October, 1910.

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.

But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has been
blown.
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his
breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.
Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought
was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's
own heart's-blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.
Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide of
its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled
and sinned in the dark.

GEORGE STERLING

George Sterling was born at Sag Harbor, New York, December 1, 1869, and educated at various private schools in the Eastern States. He moved to the far West about 1895 and lived in California until he met death by his own hand in 1926.

Of Sterling's ten volumes of poetry, *A Wine of Wizardry* (1908) and *The House of Orchids and Other Poems* (1911) are the most characteristic. An excellent and carefully chosen *Selected Poems* was published in 1923. Sterling was happiest in the romantic manner, in most of the sonnets, in which he let his rhetoric have full sway.

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home —
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm —
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken the eternal wine —
The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
Unseen about their courts the adder slips,
Unheard the sucklings of the leopard whine;
The toad has found a resting-place divine,
And bloats in stupor between Ammon's lips.
O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
The fallen pinnacle, the shifting Sign!

Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and fane
Time's adoration of eternity, —
The cry of kingdoms past and gods undone, —
I stand as one whose feet at morning gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

Edwin Arlington Robinson was born December 22, 1869, in the village of Head Tide, Maine. When he was still a child, the Robinson family moved to the nearby town of Gardiner, which figures prominently in Robinson's poetry as "Tilbury Town." In 1891 he entered Harvard College, leaving that institution in 1893. A little collection of verse (*The Torrent and the Night Before*) was privately printed in 1896 and the following year marked the appearance of his first representative work, *The Children of the Night* (1897).

Somewhat later, Robinson was struggling in various capacities to make a living in New York, five years passing before the publication of *Captain Craig* (1902). This richly detailed narrative, recalling Browning's method, increased Robinson's audience. His work was brought to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt (then President of the United States), who became interested in the poet and, a few years later, offered him a place in the New York Customs House. In 1910, he published a series of short poems, *The Town Down the River*. *The Man Against the Sky*, Robinson's fullest and most penetrating work, appeared in 1916. (See Preface.)

In all of these books there is manifest that searching for truth, that constant questioning, which takes the place of mere acceptance. As the work of a native portrait painter, nothing, with the exception of some of Frost's pictures, has been produced that is at once so keen and so kindly; in the half-cynical, half-mystical etchings like "Miniver Cheevy," and "Richard Cory" — lines where Robinson's irony is inextricably mixed with tenderness — his art is at its height. His splendid "The Master," one of the finest evocations of Lincoln, is, at the same time, a bitter commentary on the commercialism of the times and the "shopman's test of age and worth." In his two reanimations of the Arthurian legends, *Merlin* (1917) and *Launcelot* (1920), Robinson, differing radically from the idyls of Tennyson, has colored the tale with somber reflections of the collapse of old orders, the darkness of an age in ashes.

Avon's Harvest, which the author has called "a dime novel in verse," a study of a fear-haunted, hate-driven man, appeared in 1921. In the same year The Macmillan Company issued his *Collected Poems*, which received the Pulitzer Prize for 1921. *Roman Bartholow* (1923) is a single poem of almost two hundred pages; a dramatic and introspective narrative in blank verse. *The Man Who Died Twice* (1924), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that year, is likewise one long poem: a tale which is a cross between a grotesque recital and inspired metaphysics. Curiously enough, the mixture is one of Robinson's greatest triumphs; none of his portraits, either miniatures or full-length canvases, has given us a profounder insight of a tortured soul than this of Fernando Nash, "the king who lost his crown before he had it." *Dionysus in Doubt* (1925) contains, besides several characteristic extended poems, a dozen of Robinson's finest dramatic sonnets. *Tristram* (1927) vividly modernizes the immortal love-story and moves with an emotional warmth that is unusual in Robinson.

Although he is often accused of holding a negative attitude toward life, Robinson's philosophy is essentially positive; a dogged desire for a deeper faith, a greater light, is his. It is a philosophy expressed in *Captain Craig:*

> . . . Take on yourself
> But your sincerity, and you take on
> Good promise for all climbing; fly for truth
> And hell shall have no storm to crush your flight,
> No laughter to vex down your loyalty.

MINIVER CHEEVY[1]

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Miniver loved the Medici,
  Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
  Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
  And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
  Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
  But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
  And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
  Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
  And kept on drinking.

THE MASTER *[1]

(*Lincoln as seen, presumably, by one of his contemporaries shortly after the Civil War*)

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.

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* See pages 87, 113, 167, 171, 174, 202.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait —
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harrassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic — and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

AN OLD STORY[1]

Strange that I did not know him then,
    That friend of mine!
I did not even show him then
    One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
    To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
    For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
    Once, in my pride! . . .
I never knew the worth of him
    Until he died.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night*.

THE DARK HILLS[1]

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade — as if the last of days
Were fading, and all wars were done.

RICHARD CORY[2]

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
  We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
  Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
  And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
  "Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich — yes, richer than a king,
  And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
  To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
  And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
  Went home and put a bullet through his head.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems* by E. A. Robinson.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night* by E. A. Robinson.

BEWICK FINZER[1]

Time was when his half million drew
The breath of six per cent;
But soon the worm of what-was-not
Fed hard on his content;
And something crumbled in his brain
When his half million went.

Time passed, and filled along with his
The place of many more;
Time came, and hardly one of us
Had credence to restore,
From what appeared one day, the man
Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,
The coat worn out with care,
The cleanliness of indigence,
The brilliance of despair,
The fond imponderable dreams
Of affluence, — all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,
Fares hard now in the race,
With heart and eye that have a task
When he looks in the face
Of one who might so easily
Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan
We give and then forget;
He comes, and probably for years
Will he be coming yet, —
Familiar as an old mistake,
And futile as regret.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Man Against the Sky* by E. A. Robinson.

Edgar Lee Masters was born at Garnett, Kansas, August 23, 1869, of old Puritan and pioneering stock. When he was still a boy, the family moved to Illinois, where, after desultory schooling, he studied law in his father's office at Lewiston. For a year he practiced with his father and then went to Chicago, where he became a successful and prominent attorney.

Before going to Chicago, Masters had composed a great quantity of verse in traditional forms on still more traditional themes; by the time he was twenty-four he had written about four hundred poems, revealing the result of wide reading and betraying the influence of Poe, Keats, Shelley and Swinburne. His work, previous to the publication of *Spoon River Anthology*, was derivative and undistinguished.

Taking as his model *The Greek Anthology*, which his friend William Marion Reedy had pressed upon him, in 1914 Masters evolved *Spoon River Anthology*, that astonishing assemblage of over two hundred self-inscribed epitaphs, in which the dead of a Middle Western town are supposed to have written the truth about themselves. Through these frank revelations, many of them interrelated, the village is recreated for us; it lives again, unvarnished and typical, with all its intrigues, hypocrisies, feuds, martyrdoms and occasional exaltations. The monotony of existence in a drab township, the defeat of ideals, the struggle toward higher goals — all is synthesized in these crowded pages. All moods and all manner of voices are heard here — even Masters's, who explains the reason for his medium and the selection of his form through "Petit, the Poet."

Songs and Satires (1916) is notable for several lengthy soliloquies and the eloquent "Silence," one of Masters's noblest moods. *Starved Rock* (1919), *Domesday Book* (1920), *The Open Sea* (1921) and the unsuccessful sequel *The New Spoon River* (1924) are, like all Masters's later books, queerly assembled mixtures of good, bad and derivative verse. And yet, for all of this poet's borrowings, in spite of his cynicism and disillusion, Masters's work is a continual searching for some key to the mystery of truth, the mastery of existence.

Masters's ideas and reactions to life are more memorable than his characters. As Robert Littell summarized, "What we remember is the expedition, and its desperately honest, saltless aftertaste, but we don't remember any of the individuals. Their faces, less distinct than the gossip, detective work and idealistic generalizations in which they swam, have long since disappeared. There were no characters, and what we mistook for such were case histories in the clinic of life's hospital, with Mr. Masters as surgeon rather than artist."

PETIT, THE POET[1]

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel —
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens —
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure —
All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers —
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

LUCINDA MATLOCK[1]

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

And many a flower and medicinal weed —
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you —
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE *[1]

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
" With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

STEPHEN CRANE

Stephen Crane, whose literary career was one of the most meteoric in American letters, was born at Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871. After taking a partial course at Lafayette College, he entered journalism at sixteen and, until the time of his death, was a reporter and writer of newspaper sketches. When he died, at the age of thirty, he had produced ten printed volumes (one of which, *The Red Badge of Courage*, is a classic among descriptive novels), two more announced for publication and two others which were appearing serially.

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* See pages 87, 106, 167, 171, 174, 202.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

At various periods in Crane's brief career, he experimented in verse, seeking to find new effects in unrhymed lines for his acuteness of vision. The results were embodied in two volumes of unusual poetry, *The Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899); lines that anticipated the Imagists and the epigrammatic free verse that followed fifteen years later.

It is more than probable that his feverish energy of production aggravated the illness that caused Crane's death. He reached his refuge in the Black Forest only to die at the journey's end, June 5, 1900.

I SAW A MAN

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
" It is futile," I said,
" You can never " —

" You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

THE WAYFARER

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
" Ha," he said,
" I see that no one has passed here
In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
" Well," he mumbled at last,
" Doubtless there are other roads."

THE BLADES OF GRASS

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
" What did you do? "
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
" And what did you do? "
The little blade answered, " Oh, my Lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
" Oh, best little blade of grass! " he said.

T. A. DALY

Thomas Augustine Daly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1871. He attended Villanova College and Fordham University (1889), leaving there at the end of his sophomore year to become a newspaper man. Since 1891 he has been on the staff of various Philadelphia journals, writing reviews, editorials, travel-notes and, most of all, running the columns in which his much-quoted verse originally appeared.

Canzoni (1906) and *Carmina* (1909) contain the best-known of Daly's varied dialect verse. Although he has written in half a dozen different idioms including "straight" English (*vide Songs of Wedlock*, 1916), his half-humorous, half-pathetic interpretations of the Irish and Italian immigrants are his *forte*. "Mia Carlotta" ranks with the best dialect of the period; "The Song of the Thrush," though less immediate in appeal, is a more personal communication.

Seldom descending to caricature, Daly exhibits the foibles of his characters without exploiting them; even the lightest passages in

McAroni Ballads (1919) are done with delicacy and a not too sentimental appreciation. Less popular than Riley or Dunbar, Daly is more skillful and versatile than either, his range and quality are comparable to Field's.

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

Ah! the May was grand this mornin'!
Shure, how could I feel forlorn in
Such a land, when tree and flower tossed their kisses to the breeze?
Could an Irish heart be quiet
While the Spring was runnin' riot,
An' the birds of free America were singin' in the trees?
In the songs that they were singin'
No familiar note was ringin',
But I strove to imitate them an' I whistled like a lad.
Oh, my heart was warm to love them
For the very newness of them —
For the ould songs that they helped me to forget — an' I was glad.

So I mocked the feathered choir
To my hungry heart's desire,
An' I gloried in the comradeship that made their joy my own.
Till a new note sounded, stillin'
All the rest. A thrush was trillin'!
Ah, the thrush I left behind me in the fields about Athlone!
Where, upon the whitethorn swayin',
He was minstrel of the Mayin',
In my days of love an' laughter that the years have laid at rest;
Here again his notes were ringin'!
But I'd lost the heart for singin' —
Ah, the song I could not answer was the one I knew the best.

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for " mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, " how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta —
Yes, playnta he gotta —
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seelly young girls for da " mash,"
But notta —
You bat my life, notta —
Carlotta!
I gotta!

ARTHUR GUITERMAN

Arthur Guiterman was born in Vienna, Austria, of American parents, November 20, 1871. He was brought to America as a child and has lived most of his life in New York City. An unusually skilled versifier, he originated the "rhymed reviews" in *Life*. to which he contributed many of his most dexterous pieces, later collected in *The Laughing Muse* (1915), *The Mirthful Lyre* (1918), and *The Light Guitar* (1923). *Ballads of Old New York* (1920) discloses Guiterman as a historical recorder as well as an impudent rhymester.

DAMMING THE MISSOURI

Once a company of Beavers in their engineering fury
Took a notion that their Mission was to dam the Big Missouri;
Under Consecrated Leaders they assembled in convention
For the instant prosecution of their laudable intention.
They were able hardwood-biters, they were doughty timber-topplers,
And they beavered down the willows, and they felled the heavy poplars,
And they laid them to the riffle, and were very, very clever,
They were brilliant! — yet the river paid them no regard whatever,
But through barrens dry and sandy, or through marshes wet and drippy
Went on flowing, flowing, flowing to the mighty Mississippi.

When we try to curb the surges of unchanging human nature,
Or to quench a conflagration by an act of legislature,
Or to stem a revolution by the words of quiet thinkers,
Or to hold Religion static in a martingale and blinkers,
Or to turn the silent current of Continuous Creation,
Or to cork the effervescence of a rising generation,
Or to stop our zealous doctors from inventing new diseases,
Or to keep a wife from doing just exactly as she pleases,
We are every bit as crazy, as I'll prove to any jury,
As those enterprising Beavers when they dammed the Big Missouri.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 at Dayton, Ohio, the son of negro slaves. He was, before and after he began to write his interpretative verse, an elevator-boy. He tried newspaper work unsuccessfully and, in 1899, was given a minor position in the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C.

Dunbar's first collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896), contains many of his most characteristic poems. In an introduction, in which mention was made of the octoroon Dumas and the great Russian poet Pushkin, who was a mulatto, William Dean Howells wrote, "So far as I can remember, Paul Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the negro life æsthetically and express it lyrically. . . . His brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him."

Lyrics of the Hearthside (1899) and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (1903) are two other volumes full of folk-stuff. And though the final *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905) is less original, being crowded with echoes of all kinds of poetry from the songs of Robert Burns to the childhood rhymes of J. W. Riley, it contains a few of Dunbar's least-known but keenest interpretations.

Dunbar died in Dayton, Ohio, February 10, 1906.

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED[1]

Woman's sho' a cur'ous critter, an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.
She's a mess o' funny capahs f'om huh slippahs to huh hat.
Ef yo' tries to un'erstan' huh, an' yo' fails, des' up an' say:
"D' ain't a bit o' use to try to un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but I's jes' a-settin' down
Some o' my own obserwations, w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.
Ef yo' ax me fu' to prove it, I ken do it mighty fine,
Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en I's sleepin' good an' soun',
I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an' somebody movin' 'roun'.

---

[1] From *Lyrics of Love and Laughter*. Copyright, 1903, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

An' I say, "Lize, whut yo' doin'?" But she frown an' shek huh haid,
"Hesh yo' mouf, I's only tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

"Don' yo' know a chile gits restless, layin' all de night one way?
An' yo' got to kind o' 'range him sev'al times befo' de day?
So de little necks won't worry, an' de little backs won't break;
Don' yo' t'ink 'cause chillun's chillun dey haint got no pain an' ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists 'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun' erbout,
'Twell I don' see how de chillun evah keeps f'om hollahin' out.
Den she lif's 'em up head down'ards, so's dey won't git livah-grown,
But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful ez a liza'd on a stone.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu' wakin' on de dawn o' jedgement day,
Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel lay his trumpet down an' say,
"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy, down on earf ermong de dead?"—
'T will be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

A COQUETTE CONQUERED[1]

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone —
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my min';
Ain't gwine ma'y you — nuffin' de kin'.

---

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life*. Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry —
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! Whut yo' got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat —
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.
'Taint no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't now! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

GUY WETMORE CARRYL

Guy Wetmore Carryl, son of Charles Edward Carryl (see page 77), was born in New York City, March 4, 1873. He graduated from Columbia University in 1895, was editor of *Munsey's Magazine*, 1895–96, and, during the time he lived abroad (from 1897 to 1902), was the foreign representative of various American publications.

Inheriting a remarkable technical gift from his father, young Carryl soon surpassed him as well as all other rivals in the field of brilliantly rhymed, brilliantly turned burlesques. Although he wrote several serious poems (the best of which have been collected in the posthumously published *The Garden of Years* (1904), Carryl's most characteristic work is to be found in his perversions of the parables of Æsop, *Fables for the Frivolous* (1898), the topsy-turvy interpretations of old nursery rhymes, *Mother Goose for Grownups* (1900) and his fantastic variations on the fairy tales in *Grimm Tales Made Gay* (1903) — all of them with a surprising (and punning) Moral attached.

This extraordinary versifier died, before reaching the height of his power, at the age of thirty-one, in the summer of 1904.

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.
We'll make it any kind you please —
At all events it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
And spoke in words beguiling:
"*J'admire*," said he, "*ton beau plumage*,"
(The which was simply persiflage.)

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
A crow that's bound to roost;
And whichsoever he espies
He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet fowl," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;

He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but
He only sighed and answered "Tut."

The Moral is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
For hypochondriasis,
A widow had forebodings which a cloud around her flung.
And with expression cynical
For half the day a clinical
Thermometer she held beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
She suffered from the vapors,
At every tale of malady or accident she'd groan;

In every new and smart disease,
From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
  She recognized the symptoms as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
To try each novel tonic,
  Elixir, panacea, lotion, opiate, and balm;
And from a homeopathist
Would change to an hydropathist,
  And back again, with stupefying calm!

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:
  Though not convinced of apoplexy, yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical,
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
  And said she had a buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning
  The mind of Jack, her son and heir, unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
  For raising beans was something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid
  Her callous son affectionate and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
  Accompanied by rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,
  And twined with tender fingers the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
  Or sighed an absent-minded "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:
  No tear bedimmed his eye, however touching was her talk.
She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
  Was when no bean-pods grew upon the stalk!

But then he wabbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,
  And, taking out his handkerchief to mop away his tears,
Exclaimed: " It hasn't got any! "
He found this blow to botany
  Was sadder than were all his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine
Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.
Of all sad words experience gleans
The saddest are: " It *might* have beans."
  (I did not make this up myself:
  'Twas in a book upon my shelf.
  It's witty, but I don't deny
  It's rather Whittier than I!)

LEONORA SPEYER

Leonora Speyer was born in Washington, D. C., in 1873. On her mother's side, she is of New England stock; her father was Count Ferdinand von Stosch, a Prussian nobleman who fought for the Union in the Civil War, became an American citizen, lived and died here. As a girl, Leonora von Stosch was a professional violinist, playing with Nikisch, Anton Seidl and other famous conductors. Later, she married Sir Edgar Speyer who, before the World War, did much to bring modern European music to England. Since 1915, Mrs. Speyer has lived in New York City.

Although her husband had always written playlets for the entertainment of the family and had published a German translation of Keats' poems, Leonora Speyer had never written until 1915. For five years after that date, her verse appeared in various magazines and attracted no little attention. Her first volume, *A Canopic Jar*, appeared in 1921. Much of it was tentative and fumbling, much of it oversweet. But there was something clear and definite in such sonnets as "The Ladder," and even some of the free verse had a distinct personal turn. Her second volume *Fiddler's Farewell* (1926), which was given the Pulitzer Award in 1927, shows a firmer craftsmanship and her spirited "Ballad of Doc Higgins" won second place in *The Nation's* poetry prize contest in 1926.

ITALIAN QUATRAINS

New Excavations

A workman with a spade in half a day
Can push two thousand lagging years away;
See, how the tragic villas, one by one,
Like drowsy lizards, creep into the sun.

Olive Tree

Moonlight is always on its leaves;
At noon there is a midnight air
About its branches, that deceives
Lovers who chance to wander there.

Pompeii

They let me play at digging in that place,
Scoop ash from painted walls. . . . A girl's Greek face
Stared from the frieze. Between her and the skies
I hid the smoking mountain from her eyes!

H. H. KNIBBS

Harry Herbert Knibbs was born at Niagara Falls, October 24, 1874. After a desultory schooling, he attended Harvard for three years when he was thirty-four. "Somebody said I took honors in English," says Knibbs, "but I never saw them." He wrote his first book, *Lost Farm Camp*, a novel, as a class exercise. In 1911, Knibbs settled in Los Angeles, California, where he has lived ever since.

In *Riders of the Stars* (1916) and *Songs of the Trail* (1920), Knibbs carries on the tradition of Bret Harte and the Pike County Ballads.

High-hearted verse this is, with more than an occasional flash of poetry. To the typical Western breeziness, Knibbs adds a wider whimsicality, a rough-shod but nimble imagination.

THE VALLEY THAT GOD FORGOT

Out in the desert spaces, edged by a hazy blue,
Davison sought the faces of the long-lost friends he knew:
They were there, in the distance dreaming
Their dreams that were worn and old;
They were there, to his frenzied seeming,
Still burrowing down for gold.

Davison's face was leather; his mouth was a swollen blot,
His mind was a floating feather, in The Valley That God Forgot;
Wild as a dog gone loco,
Or sullen or meek, by turns,
He mumbled a "Poco! Poco!"
And whispered of pools and ferns.

Gold! Why his, for the finding! But water was never found,
Save in deep caverns winding miles through the underground:
Cool, far, shadowy places
Edged by the mirrored trees,
When — Davison saw the faces!
And fear let loose his knees.

There was Shorty who owed him money, and Billing who bossed the crowd;
And Steve whom the boys called "Sunny," and Collins who talked so loud:
Miguel with the handsome daughter,
And the rustler, Ed McCray;
Five — and they begged for water,
And offered him gold, in pay.

Gold? It was never cheaper. And Davison shook his head:
" The price of a drink is steeper out here than in town," he said.
He laughed as they mouthed and muttered
Through lips that were cracked and dried;
The pulse in his ear-drum fluttered:
" I'm through with the game! " he cried.

" I'm through! " And he knelt and fumbled the cap of his dry canteen,
Then, rising, he swayed and stumbled into a black ravine:
His ghostly comrades followed,
For Davison's end was near,
And a shallow grave they hollowed,
When up from it, cool and clear

Bubbled the water — hidden a pick-stroke beneath the sand;
Davison, phantom-ridden, scooped with a shaking hand . . .
Davison swears they made it,
The Well where we drank today.
Davison's game? He played it
And won — so the town-folk say:

Called it, The Morning-Glory — near those abandoned stamps,
And Davison's crazy story was told in a hundred camps:
Time and the times have tamed it,
His yarn — and this desert spot,
But I'm strong for the man who named it,
The Valley That God Forgot.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

Anna Hempstead Branch was born at New London, Connecticut. She graduated from Smith College in 1897 and has devoted herself to literature ever since.

Her two chief volumes, *The Shoes That Danced* (1905) and *Rose of the Wind* (1910), show a singer who is less fanciful than philosophic.

Her lines are admirably condensed, rich in personal value as well as poetic revelation; they maintain a high and austere level. A typical poem, "The Monk in the Kitchen," with its spiritual loveliness and verbal felicity, is a celebration of cleanness that gives order an almost mystical nobility.

Although nothing she has ever written has attained the popularity of her shorter works, "Nimrod" has an epic sweep, a large movement which, within the greater curve, contains many moments of exalted imagery. The deeply religious feeling implicit in this work governs the author as a person no less than as a poet, Miss Branch having given a great part of her life to settlement work on the East Side of New York.

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo — I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air —
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings

Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings —
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon —
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not:
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He requires of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.

The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful — but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried — " Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee? " — And he said,
" When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid air.
Nay — thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

AMY LOWELL

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874, of a long line of noted publicists and poets, the first colonist (a Percival Lowell) arriving in Newburyport in 1637. James Russell Lowell was a cousin of her grandfather; Abbott Lawrence, her mother's father, was minister to England; and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, her brother, is president of Harvard University.

Her first volume, *A Dome of Many-colored Glass* (1912), was a strangely unpromising book. The subjects were as conventional as the treatment of them; the influence of Keats and Tennyson was evident; the tone was soft and almost without a trace of personality. It was a queer prologue to the vivid *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914) and *Men, Women and Ghosts* (1916), which marked not only an extraordinary advance but a totally new individuality. These two volumes contained many distinctive poems written in the usual forms, a score of pictorial pieces illustrating Miss Lowell's identification with the Imagists (see Preface) and the first appearance in English of "polyphonic prose."

It was because of such experiments in form and technique that Miss Lowell first attracted attention and is still best known. But, beneath her preoccupation with theories and novelty of utterance, one can observe and appreciate the designer of arabesques, the poet of the external world, the dynamic artificer who (*vide* such poems as "A Lady," "Vintage" and the epical "Bronze Horses") revivifies history with a creative excitement.

Can Grande's Castle (1918), like the later *Legends* (1921), reveals Miss Lowell as the gifted narrator, the teller of bizarre and brilliant stories. The feverish agitation is less prominent in her quieter and more personal *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919), a no less distinctive collection.

Legends (1921) is a volume closely related to *Can Grande's Castle*. Here are eleven stories placed against seven different backgrounds. All of them are as unusual as what the reader had come to expect of Miss Lowell; the first one must be rated among her most dazzling achievements. Among her posthumous work, *What's O'Clock?* (1925) is the most outstanding; it includes verses which establish a close kinship with her environment. "Lilacs" and "Meeting-House Hill" are two in this *genre*. *East Wind* (1926) and *Ballads for Sale* (1927) are other posthumous books, the first a set of New England dramas and tales, the second a miscellaneous collection.

Besides Miss Lowell's original poetry, she undertook many studies in foreign literatures; she made the English versions of the poems translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough in the vivid *Fir-Flower Tablets* (1921). She also wrote two volumes of critical essays: *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), both of them invaluable aids to the student of contemporary literature. Two years after its publication she acknowledged the authorship of the anonymous *A Critical Fable* (1922), a modern sequel to James Russell Lowell's *A Fable for Critics*. Her monumental *John Keats*, an exhaustive biography and analysis of the poet in two volumes, appeared early in 1925.

For years Miss Lowell had been suffering from ill health; she had been operated upon several times, but her general condition as well as her continual desire to work, nullified the effects of the operations. In April, 1925, her condition became worse; she was forced to cancel a projected lecture trip through England and to cease all work. She died as the result of an unexpected paralytic stroke on May 12, 1925.

A LADY[1]

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.
In your eyes
Smoulder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in odd, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all good folk have put out their bedroom candles,
And the city is still.

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[1] All the poems by Amy Lowell are used by permission of, and special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.
Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky;
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,
Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

WIND AND SILVER

Greatly shining,
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their dragon scales
As she passes over them.

A DECADE

When you came, you were like red wine and honey,
And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.
Now you are like morning bread,
Smooth and pleasant.
I hardly taste you at all, for I know your savour;
But I am completely nourished.

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: " Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.

I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums* of the
Canterbury bells.

(Frederic) Ridgely Torrence was born at Xenia, Ohio, November 27, 1875, and was educated at Miami and Princeton University. For some years he was librarian of the Astor Library in New York City (1897–1901), later assuming an editorial position on the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. In 1921 he became poetry editor of *The New Republic.*

His first volume, *The House of a Hundred Lights* (1900), bears the grave subtitle "A Psalm of Experience after Reading a Couplet of Bidpai" and is a half-whimsical, half-searching hodge-podge of philosophy, love lyrics, artlessness and impudence.

For a quarter of a century Torrence remained in the peculiar position of one whose poetry was known only through the anthologies, his own verse being not merely unprocurable, but unprinted. *Hesperides* (1925) remedied this strange circumstance. Like his first volume, this is not a large book — Torrence is not a voluminous writer — but in these one hundred pages is contained some of the definite and distinguished poetry of the day.

Between Torrence's earliest and most recent volume, three books of his plays were published: *El Dorado* (1903), *Abelard and Heloise* (1907), and *Granny Maumee, The Rider of Dreams, Simon the Cyrenian* (1917). The last group, being three plays for a negro theater, contains the best of Torrence's dramatic writing.

THE BIRD AND THE TREE

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong tonight.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long tonight.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door tonight.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score tonight.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.

They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
An' that's the reason why tonight
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door —
You're out to die tonight.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there —
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant —
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go —
For you it may be better so —
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

(*Southern Ohio Market Town*)

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name " Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushels at sixty cents,
It's all I carried —
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married —

"It feels like frost was near —
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

ROBERT FROST

Although known as the chief interpreter of the new New England, Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. At the age of ten he came East to the towns and hills where, for eight generations, his forefathers had lived. After graduating from the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1892, Frost entered Dartmouth College, where he remained only a few months. The routine of study was too much for him and, determined to keep his mind free for creative work, he decided to earn his living and became a bobbin boy in one of the mills at Lawrence. He had already begun to write poetry; a few of his verses had appeared in *The Independent*. But the strange, soil-flavored quality which even then distinguished his lines was not relished by the editors, and for twenty years Frost continued to write his highly characteristic work in spite of the discouraging apathy.

After another unsuccessful attempt to achieve culture *via* college (Harvard 1897), Frost engaged in industry. For about three years he taught school, made shoes, edited a weekly paper, and in 1900 became a farmer at Derry, New Hampshire. During the next eleven years Frost labored to wrest a living from the stubborn rocky hills with scant success. Loneliness claimed him for its own; the ground refused to give him a living; the literary world continued oblivious of his existence. Frost sought a change of environment and, after a few years' teaching at Derry and Plymouth, New Hampshire, sold his farm and, with his wife and four children, sailed for England in September, 1912.

A few months later, *A Boy's Will* (1913), his first collection, was published and Frost was recognized at once as one of the few authentic voices of modern poetry. In the spring of the same year, *North of Boston* (1914), one of the most intensely American books ever printed, was published in England. (See Preface.) This is, as he has called it, a "book of people." And it is more than that — it is a book of backgrounds as living and dramatic as the people they overshadow. Frost vivifies a stone wall, an empty cottage, an apple-tree, a mountain, a forgotten wood-pile left

> To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
> With the slow, smokeless burning of decay.

North of Boston, like its successor, contains much of the finest poetry of our time. Rich in its actualities, richer in its spiritual values, every line moves with the double force of observation and implication. The poet's colors and characters are close to their soil; they remain rooted in realism. But Frost is never a photographic realist. "There are," he once said, "two types of realist — the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to be the second kind. . . . To me, the thing that art does for life is to strip it to form."

Sounds, the delicate accents of speech, find their most sympathetic recorder here. Frost's lines disclose the subtle shades of emphasis and expression in words, in the rhythms and tones that call to life a whole scene by presenting only a significant detail. "If I must be classified as a poet," Frost once said, with the suspicion of a twinkle, "I might be called a Synecdochist; for I prefer the synecdoche in poetry — that figure of speech in which we use a part for the whole."

In March, 1915, Frost came back to America — to a hill outside of Franconia, New Hampshire, to be precise. *North of Boston* had been published in the United States, and its author, who had left the country an unknown writer, returned to find himself famous. *Mountain Interval*, containing some of Frost's most beautiful poems ("Birches," "An Old Man's Winter Night," "The Hill Wife"), appeared in 1916. The idiom is the same as in the earlier volumes, but the notes are more varied, the convictions are stronger. The essential things are unchanged. The first poem in Frost's first book sums it up:

> They would not find me changed from him they knew —
> Only more sure of all I thought was true.

New Hampshire (1923), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best volume of poetry published in 1923, synthesizes Frost's qualities: it combines the stark unity of *North of Boston* and the diffused geniality of *Mountain Interval*. If any one thing predominates, it is a feeling of quiet classicism; the poet has lowered his voice but not the strength of his convictions. This holds true of the more recent poems, increasingly quiet and assured, poems like "Sand Dunes" and "The Passing Glimpse."

It has been said that Frost's work suffers from an exclusiveness, and even his most ardent admirers would be willing to admit that his is not an indiscriminately inclusive passion like Whitman's. But Frost loves what he loves with a fierce attachment, a fixed tenderness beyond a more easily transferred regard. His devotion to the intimacies of earth is, even more than Wordsworth's, rich in its fidelity. What his emotion (or his poetry) may lack in windy range, is trebly compensated for by its untroubled depths.

Frost taught at Amherst College from 1916 to 1919 and, after an interval at Ann Arbor, from 1923 to 1925, returned to resume his "idle professorship" at Amherst where he represents poetry but does not "teach" it. He spends part of the year in educational circles, acting as "a sort of poetic radiator," a small part lecturing, and the rest of the time at his farm in Vermont.

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:

I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance;
" Stay where you are until our backs are turned! "
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, " Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
" *Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down! " I could say " Elves " to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, " Good fences make good neighbors."

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,— alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together,' I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

BLUE-BUTTERFLY DAY

It is blue-butterfly day here in spring,
And with these sky-flakes down in flurry on flurry,
There is more unmixed color on the wing
Than flowers will show for days unless they hurry.

But these are flowers that fly and all but sing;
And now from having ridden out desire,
They lie closed over in the wind and cling
Where wheels have freshly sliced the April mire.

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust —
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.

But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows —
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise

To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

THE ONSET

Always the same when on a fated night
At last the gathered snow lets down as white
As may be in dark woods and with a song
It shall not make again all winter long —
Of hissing on the yet uncovered ground, —
I almost stumble looking up and round,
As one who, overtaken by the end,
Gives up his errand and lets death descend
Upon him where he is, with nothing done
To evil, no important triumph won
More than if life had never been begun.

Yet all the precedent is on my side:
I know that winter-death has never tried
The earth but it has failed; the snow may heap
In long storms an undrifted four feet deep
As measured against maple, birch or oak;
It cannot check the Peeper's silver croak;
And I shall see the snow all go down hill
In water of a slender April rill
That flashes tail through last year's withered brake
And dead weed like a disappearing snake.
Nothing will be left white but here a birch
And there a clump of houses with a church.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him — at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what;
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,

And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man — one man — can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

SAND DUNES

Sea waves are green and wet,
But up from where they die
Rise others vaster yet,
And those are brown and dry.

They are the sea made land
To come at the fisher town,
And bury in solid sand
The men she could not drown.

She may know cove and cape,
But she does not know mankind
If by any change of shape
She hopes to cut off mind.

Men left her a ship to sink;
They can leave her a hut as well,
And be but more free to think
For the one more cast-off shell.

THE PASSING GLIMPSE

(*To Ridgely Torrence on last looking into his "Hesperides"*)

I often see flowers from a passing car
That are gone before I can tell what they are.

I want to get out of the train and go back
To see what they were beside the track.

I name all the kinds I am sure they weren't:
Not fireweed loving where woods have burnt —

Nor bluebells gracing a tunnel mouth —
Nor lupine living on sand and drouth.

Was something brushed across my mind
That no one on earth will ever find?

Heaven gives its glimpses only to those
Not in position to look too close.

CARL SANDBURG

Carl (August) Sandburg was born of Swedish stock at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His schooling was haphazard; at thirteen he went to work on a milk wagon. During the next six years he was, in rapid succession, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter in a cheap theater, truck-handler in a brick-yard, turner apprentice in a pottery, dish-washer in Denver and Omaha hotels, harvest hand in Kansas wheat fields. These tasks equipped him, as no amount of learning could have done, to be the laureate of industrial America.

In 1904, Sandburg published the proverbial "slender sheaf"; a tiny pamphlet of twenty-two poems, uneven in quality but strangely like the work of the mature Sandburg in feeling. It was twelve years later before the poet became known to the public. The vigor which lay at the heart of American toil found its outlet at last.

Chicago Poems (1916) is full of ferment; it seethes with a direct poetry surcharged with tremendous energy. Here is an almost animal exultation that is also an exaltation. Sandburg's speech is simple and powerful; he uses slang as freely (and beautifully) as his predecessors used the now archaic tongue of their times. (See Preface.) Immediately the cries of protest were heard; Sandburg was coarse and brutal; his work ugly and distorted; his language unrefined, unfit for poetry. His detractors forgot that Sandburg was only brutal when dealing with brutality; that, beneath his toughness, he was one of the tenderest of living poets.

Cornhuskers (1918) is another step forward; it is fully as sweeping as its forerunner and far more sensitive. The gain in power and restraint is evident in the very first poem, a magnificent panoramic vision of the prairie. Here is something of the surge of a Norse saga; *Cornhuskers* is keen with a rude fervor, a vast sympathy for all that is splendid and terrible in Nature. But the raw violence is restrained to the point of mysticism. There are, in this volume, dozens of those delicate perceptions of beauty that must astonish those who think that Sandburg can write only a big-fisted, roughneck sort of poetry. "Cool Tombs," one of the most poignant lyrics of our time, moves with a new music; "Grass" whispers as quietly as the earlier "Fog" stole in on stealthy, cat-like feet.

Smoke and Steel (1920), which divided the Pulitzer Prize awarded to the most distinctive poetry of the year, is the sublimation of its predecessors. In this ripest of his collections, Sandburg has fused mood, accent and image in a fresh intensity. It is a fit setting for the title-poem, which is, in spite of certain over-mystical accents, an epic of industrialism. Smoke-belching chimneys are here, quarries and great boulders of iron-ribbed rock; here are titanic visions: the dreams of men and machinery. And silence is here — the silence of sleeping tenements and sun-soaked cornfields. *Slabs of the Sunburnt West*, a smaller collection, but an amplification of this strain, appeared in 1922. *Selected Poems*, with an introduction by the English critic Rebecca West, was published in 1926.

Besides his poetry, Sandburg has written two volumes of highly imaginative and, if one can conceive of such a thing, humorously mystical short tales for children: *Rootabaga Stories* (1922) and *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923). Eight years were spent travelling and studying documents for his remarkable *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (1926), and assembling material for his collection of native folk-tunes *The American Songbag* (1927).

What makes all this work so vital is Sandburg's own spirit: a never-sated joy in existence, a continually fresh delight in the variety and wonder of life.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work —
            I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
            What place is this?
            Where are we now?

            I am the grass.
            Let me work.

PRAYERS OF STEEL

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls;
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue
nights into white stars.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he
forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the
dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall
Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the
dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in
November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does
she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries,
cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin
horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell
me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust
. . . in the cool tombs.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

FROM "SMOKE AND STEEL"

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.
Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship funnel,
They all go up in a line with the smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south.
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.

Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from —
You and I and our heads of smoke.

. . . .

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers;
Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dust horizon —
They cross on the sky and count our years.

. . . .

A bar of steel — it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail, a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburg, Youngstown, Gary — they make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

The birdmen drone
In the blue; it is steel
a motor sings and zooms.

. . . .

Steel barb-wire around The Works.
Steel guns in the holsters of the guards at the gates of The Works.
Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed from the earth by steel, lifted and lugged by arms of steel, sung on its way by the clanking clam-shells.

The runners now, the handlers now, are steel; they dig and clutch and haul; they hoist their automatic knuckles from job to job; they are steel making steel.
Fire and dust and air fight in the furnaces; the pour is timed, the billets wriggle; the clinkers are dumped:
Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the land; diving steel in the sea, climbing steel in the sky.

SMOKE ROSE GOLD

The dome of the capitol looks to the Potomac river.
Out of haze over the sunset,
Out of a smoke rose gold:
One star shines over the sunset.
Night takes the dome and the river, the sun and the smoke rose gold,
The haze changes from sunset to star.
The pour of a thin silver struggles against the dark.
A star might call: It's a long way across.

JAZZ FANTASIA[1]

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos, sob on the long cool winding saxophones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with the slippery sandpaper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops, moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle-cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans — make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

[1] Compare this poem with Hughes' "Homesick Blues" on page 260.

Can the rough stuff . . . Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes
up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the
green lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red
moon rides on the humps of the low river hills. . .
Go to it, O jazzmen.

UPSTREAM

The strong men keep coming on.
They go down shot, hanged, sick, broken.
They live on fighting, singing, lucky as plungers.
The strong mothers pulling them on . . .
The strong mothers pulling them from a dark sea, a great
prairie, a long mountain.
Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on.

LIMITED

I am riding on a limited express, one of the crack trains of
the nation.
Hurtling across the prairie into blue haze and dark air go
fifteen all-steel coaches holding a thousand people.
(All the coaches shall be scrap and rust and all the men and
women laughing in the diners and sleepers shall pass to
ashes.)
I ask a man in the smoker where he is going and he answers:
"Omaha."

FINALE

(*From "Slabs of the Sunburnt West"*)

Good night; it is scribbled on the panels
of the cold grey open desert.

Good night; on the big sky blanket over the
Santa Fé trail it is woven in the oldest
Indian blanket songs.

Buffers of land, breakers of sea, say it and
say it, over and over, good night, good night.

Tie your hat to the saddle
and ride, ride, ride, O Rider.
Lay your rails and wires
and ride, ride, ride, O Rider.

The worn tired stars say
you shall die early and die dirty.
The clean cold stars say
you shall die late and die clean.

The runaway stars say
you shall never die at all,
never at all.

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

Adelaide Crapsey was born, September 9, 1878, at Rochester, New York, where she spent her childhood. She entered Vassar College in 1897, graduating with the class of 1901. In 1905 she went abroad, studying archæology in Rome. After her return she essayed to teach, but her failing health compelled her to discontinue and though she became instructor in Poetics at Smith College in 1911, the burden was too great for her.

In 1913, after her breakdown, she began to write those brief lines which, like some of Emily Dickinson's, are so precise and poignant. She was particularly happy in her "Cinquains," a form that she originated. These five-line stanzas in the strictest possible structure (the lines having, respectively, two, four, six, eight and two syllables) doubtless owe something to the Japanese *hokku*, but Adelaide Crapsey saturated them with her own fragile loveliness.

She died at Saranac Lake, New York, on October 8, 1914. Her small volume *Verse* appeared in 1915, and a part of an unfinished *Study in English Metrics* was posthumously published in 1918.

THREE CINQUAINS

November Night

Listen . . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

Triad

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

The Warning

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

Grace Hazard Conkling was born in 1878 in New York City. After graduating from Smith College in 1899, she studied music at the University of Heidelberg (1902–3) and Paris (1903–4). Since 1914 she has been a teacher of English at Smith College, where she has done much to create an alert interest in poetry.

Mrs. Conkling's *Afternoons of April* (1915) and *Wilderness Songs* (1920) are full of a graciousness that seldom grows cloying. There is fragrant whimsicality, a child-like freshness in poems like "The Whole Duty of Berkshire Brooks," and "Frost on a Window," which remind one of the manner of her daughter, Hilda (see page 268). Her later volumes, *Ship's Log* (1924) and *Flying Fish* (1926), are more determinedly colorful but seem less spontaneous.

FROST ON A WINDOW

This forest looks the way
Nightingales sound.
Tall larches lilt and sway
Above the glittering ground:
The wild white cherry spray
Scatters radiance round.

The chuckle of the nightingale
Is like this elfin wood.
Even as his gleaming trills assail
The spirit's solitude,
These leaves of light, these branches frail
Are music's very mood.

The song of these fantastic trees,
The plumes of frost they wear,
Are for the poet's whim who sees
Through a deceptive air,
And has an ear for melodies
When never a sound is there.

VACHEL LINDSAY

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was born in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. From the window where Lindsay did most of his writing, he saw many Governors come and go, including the martyred John P. Algteld, whom he has celebrated in one of his finest poems. He graduated from Springfield High School, attended Hiram College (1897–1900), studied at the Art Institute at Chicago

(1900–3) and at the New York School of Art (1904). After two years of lecturing and settlement work, he took the first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty," and formulating his unique plans for a communal art. (See Preface.)

Like a true revivalist, he attempted to wake in the people he met a response to beauty; like Tommy Tucker, he sang, recited and chanted for his supper, distributing a little pamphlet entitled "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread." But the great audiences he was endeavoring to reach did not hear him, even though his collection *General Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1913) struck many a loud and racy note.

Lindsay broadened his effects, developed the chant and, the following year, published his *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), an infectious blend of Lindsay's three R's: Rhyme, Religion and Ragtime. In the title-poem and, in a lesser degree, the three companion chants, Lindsay struck his most powerful — and most popular — vein. These gave people (particularly when intoned aloud) that primitive joy in syncopated sound which is at the very base of song. *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917) begins with one of the most whimsical pieces Lindsay has ever devised. And if the subsequent *The Golden Whales of California* (1920) is less distinctive, it is principally because the author has written too much and too speedily to be self-critical. It is his peculiar appraisal of loveliness, the rollicking high spirits joined to a stubborn evangelism, that makes Lindsay so representative a product of his environment.

Collected Poems (1923) is a complete exhibit of Lindsay's best and worst. That Lindsay has lost whatever faculty of self-criticism he may ever have possessed is evidenced by page after page of flat crudities; entire poems proceed with nothing more creative than mere physical energy whipping up a trivial idea. *Going to the Sun* (1924), *Going to the Stars* (1925) and *The Candle in the Cabin* (1926), following each other in too rapid succession, betray Lindsay's uncritical loquacity. These volumes are distinguished chiefly by the whimsical drawings which the poet has scattered among the feeble verses.

Much of Lindsay will die; he will not live as either a prophet or a politician. But the vitality which impels the best of his galloping meters will persist; his innocent wildness of imagination, outlasting his naïve programs, will charm even those to whom his brassy declamations (religious at the core) are no longer a novelty.

Besides his original poetry, Lindsay has embodied his experiences and meditations on the road in two prose volumes, *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916) and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914), as well as an enthusiastic study of the "silent drama," *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). A curious document, half rhapsody, half visionary novel, entitled *The Golden Book of Springfield*, appeared in 1920.

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN[1]

(*John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902*)

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
" We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame —

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

TO A GOLDEN HAIRED GIRL IN A LOUISIANA TOWN[1]

You are a sunrise,
If a star should rise instead of the sun.
You are a moonrise,
If a star should come in the place of the moon.
You are the Spring,
If a face should bloom instead of an apple-bough.
You are my love,
If your heart is as kind
As your young eyes now.

THE TRAVELLER[1]

The moon's a devil jester
Who makes himself too free.
The rascal is not always
Where he appears to be.
Sometimes he is in my heart —
Sometimes he is in the sea;
Then tides are in my heart,
And tides are in the sea.

O traveller, abiding not
Where he pretends to be!

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

THE CONGO[1]

(*A Study of the Negro Race*)

I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
A deep rolling bass.
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table,
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.

THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that river-bank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong.
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voodoo rattle,
Harry the uplands,

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"

With a philosophic pause.

A roaring, epic, rag-time tune
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,

Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.

Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
Boom, steal the pygmies,
Boom, kill the Arabs,
Boom, kill the white men,

Like the wind in the chimney.

Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell.
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play: —
" Be careful what you do,

All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.

Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Rather shrill and high.

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down

With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom. . . .
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Read exactly as in first section.

A negro fairyland swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casement shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song: —
" Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,

With pomposity.

With a great deliberation and ghostliness.

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.

Shoes with a patent leather shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
While the witch-men laughed with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there: —
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom."
Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

III. The Hope of their Religion

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival. shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs,
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed their hymn books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

Exactly as in the first section.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry: —

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

With growing deliberation and joy.

Then along that river-bank, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.

In a rather high key — as delicately as possible.

There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation,
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew: —

To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune: —

Dying off into a penetrating, terrified whisper.

"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . . you."

WHEN LINCOLN CAME TO SPRINGFIELD[1]

When Lincoln came to Springfield,
In the ancient days,
Queer were the streets and sketchy,
And he was in a maze.

---

[1] See pages 87, 106, 113, 171, 174, 202.

Leaving log cabins behind him,
For the mud streets of this place,
Sorrow for Anne Rutledge
Burned in his face.

He threw his muddy saddle bags
On Joshua Speed's floor,
He took off his old hat,
He looked around the store.

He shook the long hair
On his bison-head,
He sat down on the counter,
" Speed, I've moved," he said.

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

John Gneisenau Neihardt was born in Sharpsburg, Illinois, January 8, 1881. He completed a scientific course at Nebraska Normal College in 1897 and lived among the Omaha Indians for six years (1901–7), studying their customs, characteristics and legends.

Although he had already published two books, *A Bundle of Myrrh* (1908) was his first volume to attract notice. It was full of enthusiasm and an insistent virility — qualities which were extended (and overemphasized) in *Man-Song* (1909). Neihardt found a richer note and a new restraint in *The Stranger at the Gate* (1911), the best of the lyrics from these three volumes appearing in *The Quest* (1916).

Neihardt meanwhile had studied native folk-lore, the results of which appeared in *The Song of Hugh Glass* (1915), *The Song of Three Friends* (1919), *The Song of the Indian Wars* (1926). The second, in 1920, divided the annual prize offered by the Poetry Society, halving the honors with Gladys Cromwell's *Poems*. These three of Neihardt's are detailed long poems, part of a projected epic series celebrating the winning of the West by the pioneers.

CRY OF THE PEOPLE[1]

Tremble before thy chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!
Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers.
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth — we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS[1]

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dust — a vacant shrine.

---

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon — and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps.
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody — and snaps!

WITTER BYNNER

Witter Bynner was born at Brooklyn, New York, August 10, 1881. He was graduated from Harvard in 1902 and has been assistant editor of various periodicals as well as adviser to publishers. Recently, he has spent much of his time lecturing on poetry, travelling in the Orient and encouraging young writers.

Young Harvard (1907), the first of Bynner's volumes, was, as the name implies, a celebration of his Alma Mater. *The New World* (1915) is a much riper and far more ambitious effort. In this extended poem, Bynner sought — almost too determinedly — to translate the ideals of democracy into verse. Neither of these volumes displays its author's gifts at their best, for Bynner is, first of all, a lyric poet. *Grenstone Poems* (1917) and *A Canticle of Pan* (1920) reveal a more natural singing voice. Bynner harmonizes in many keys; transposing, modulating and shifting from one tonality to another. His very versatility is his chief handicap; instead of a fusion of his gifts, we have, too often, merely a confusion as in *Caravan* (1925).

Under the pseudonym "Emanuel Morgan," Bynner was co-author with Arthur Davison Ficke (writing under the name of "Anne Knish") of *Spectra* (1916). *Spectra* was a serious burlesque of some of the extreme manifestations of modern poetic tendencies — a remarkable hoax that deceived many of the radical propagandists as well as most of the conservative critics.

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer . . .

And what is so nameless as beauty,
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnaming forever? —
Content, though it go, that it came.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN *[1]

" Lincoln? —
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington —
We was all green.

" I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life —
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

" Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all —
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

" And he was a jolly old fellow — always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own
ways.

---

* See pages 87, 106, 113, 167, 174, 202.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner. Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here,'
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys —
And he'd talk so good to 'em — so close —
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you
understand,
It's just — well, I was a farmer —
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

THE PATIENT TO THE DOCTORS

Name me no names for my disease,
With uninforming breath;
I tell you I am none of these,
But homesick unto death —

Homesick for hills that I had known,
For brooks that I had crossed,
Before I met this flesh and bone
And followed and was lost.

Save that they broke my heart at last,
Name me no name of ills.
Say only, "Here is where he passed,
Seeking again those hills."

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr., was born in Boonville, New York, November 6, 1882, and has spent most of his life in the state of his birth. He is the author of nine volumes of lyrics and lyrical sonnets, his first volume *The Path o' Dreams* being published in 1904. His two most representative collections are *The Voice in the Silence* (1911) and *The Rose Jar* (1914). Although he has written many more ambitious verses, none has been so popular as the eight lines here reprinted.

SOMETIMES

Across the fields of yesterday
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play —
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
The man I might have been.

JAMES OPPENHEIM

James Oppenheim was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, May 24, 1882. Two years later his family moved to New York City, where he has lived ever since. After a public school education, he took special courses at Columbia University (1901–3) and engaged in settlement work, acting in the capacity of assistant head worker of the Hudson Guild Settlement, and superintendent of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls (1904–7).

Oppenheim's initial venture as a poet, *Monday Morning and Other Poems* (1909), was a tentative collection, half imitative, half experimental. In spite of its spiritual indebtedness to Whitman, most of the verses are in formal meters and regular (though ragged) rhyme.

In *Songs for the New Age* (1914) and *War and Laughter* (1916) the notes are much fuller; we listen to a speech that, echoing the Whitmanic sonority, develops a music that is strangely Biblical and yet local. (See Preface.) This volume, like all of Oppenheim's subsequent work (*The Book of Self*, 1917, *The Mystic Warrior*, 1921), is analysis in terms of poetry, a slow searching that attempts to diagnose the twisting soul of man and the twisted times he lives in. The old Isaiah note, with a new introspection, rises out of such poems as "The Slave," "Tasting the Earth"; the music and imagery of the Psalms are heard in "The Flocks" and "The Runner in the Skies."

The Sea, Oppenheim's most comprehensive volume, was published in 1923. It includes the best of all his previous books of poetry with the addition of several "connecting" verses. Besides his poetry, Oppenheim has published several volumes of short stories, four novels, and two poetic plays. During 1916–17 he was editor of that promising but short-lived magazine, *The Seven Arts*.

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover . . .

THE LINCOLN CHILD[1]

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars, strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll —
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of eternal God —

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[1] See pages 87, 106, 113, 167, 171, 202.

Stars have pushed aside to let him through —
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps
One sparkling ray of God
Strikes the clod —
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing sweeps!)
Born in the wild
The Child —
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the mother-heart sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,
To the child a swaddling of flannel —
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,
The rugged boy, by danger's stress,
Learnt the speech the wild things speak,
Learnt the Earth's eternal tune
Of strife-engendered harmony —
Went to school where Life itself was master,
Went to church where Earth was minister —
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,

He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream —
That Men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls —
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls.
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain —
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth
Sent a whole land to weeping with world pain —
When a black cloud blotted out the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.
Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,
And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread.
Millions died fighting;
But in this man we mourned
Those millions, and one other —
And the States today uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother —
Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile — our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words — with Love that in real deeds was spent. . . .

Oh, to pour love through deeds —
To be as Lincoln was! —
That all the land might fill its daily needs
Glorified by a human Cause!

Then were America a vast World-Torch
Flaming a faith across the dying Earth,
Proclaiming from the Atlantic's rocky porch,
That a New World was struggling at the birth!
O living God, O Thou who living art
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,
Into our souls and sanctify our Earth —
Let down thy strength that we endure
Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child. . . .
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful —
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

ALFRED KREYMBORG

Alfred Kreymborg, one of the most daring of the younger insurgents, was born in New York City, December 10, 1883. His education was spasmodic, his childhood being spent beneath the roar of the Elevated trains. At ten he was an expert chess player, supporting himself, from the age of seventeen to twenty-five, by teaching and playing exhibition games. His passion, however, was not mathematics but music. At thirty, he began to turn to the theater as a medium.

In 1914, he organized that group of radical poets which, half-deprecatingly, half-defiantly, called itself "Others." (He edited the three anthologies of their work published in 1916, 1917 and 1919.)

Meanwhile, he had been working on a technique that was an attempt to strip poetry of its frequent wordiness and rhetorical non-essentials. *Mushrooms* (1916) was the first collection in this vein. Here Kreymborg continually sought for simplification, cutting away at his lines until they assumed an almost naked expression. Often he overdid his effects, attaining nothing more than a false ingenuousness, a sophisticated simplicity. Often, too, he failed to draw the line between what is innocently childlike and what is merely childish.

Kreymborg's volumes, *Blood of Things* (1920) and *Scarlet and Mellow* (1927), are, for all the surface oddities, the work not only of an ardent experimenter but a serious thinker. Here, in spite of what seems a persistence of occasional charlatanry, is a rich and sensitive imagination; a fancy that is as wild as it is quick-witted.

Puppet Plays, with a preface by Gordon Craig, appeared in 1923. Although in its predetermination to preserve an open-eyed wonder, Kreymborg's marionette-like emotions are often too doll-charming or too doll-tragic, these miniature dramas are appealing. However, nothing which Kreymborg had written up to this time had prepared his readers for the volume which appeared a few months later. *Less Lonely* (1923) is not merely Kreymborg's most diverse volume, it is a new Kreymborg. A portion of it is in the idiom which the poet has made his own, but the greater part of the volume is in the shape of conventional verse — the actual form, that is, is conventional although Kreymborg's turn of thought is always individual. Since the publication of this volume Kreymborg has been working almost entirely in rhyme, achieving fresh effects in essentially simple patterns. *Funnybone Alley* (1927) discloses the poet in a new role: a writer of quaint prose and city jingles for children.

Besides his poetry, Kreymborg is guilty of several premature novels and, during the intervals between the founding of various experimental magazines, prose sketches. *Troubadour* (1925) is his altogether winning autobiography.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:

one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant —
like the earth
or the sea.

THE DITTY THE CITY SANG

If a lad's but a lad in the heart of a town,
Is it mad he has grown, or a dunce or a clown,
When he crowns common sights with delights of his own?

He thought he saw ships at the end of the street
With songs that the wind taught the sails to repeat.
But washlines have nothing like ships on their feet?

He thought he saw figures and faces you miss
Coming back to embracing no more than a kiss.
Can the rain that leaves puddles be peopled with this?

He thought he heard bells where the clouds break in two.
With a tone quite as low and clear as it's blue.
But what he heard there not a cloud ever knew.

He thought he touched fingers belonging to kings,
And the crowns and the sceptres came tumbling in rings.
But all he felt there is how poverty sings.

CITY SPARROW

Who's that dusty stranger? What's he doing here?
That city-bred bird with the ill-bred leer?

Perching on branches like telegraph wires?
Chirping his slang above passionate fires?

Poking his head about, twitching his tail,
Getting drunk in our pools as if they were ale?

Never accepting, but stealing our rations?
Acting toward us as he would to relations?

Who asked him hither, what led him this way?
With his critical carping, his mockery, eh?

And worse than all these, he's a jerky reminder
Of winters, of towns, and of people no kinder.

BADGER CLARK

Badger Clark was born at Albia, Iowa, in 1883. He moved to Dakota Territory at the age of three months and now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Clark is one of the few men who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore, many of his songs having been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own.

Sun and Saddle Leather (1915) and *Grass-Grown Trails* (1917) are the expression of a native singer; happy, spontaneous and seldom "literary." There is wind in these songs; the smell of camp-smoke and the colors of prairie sunsets rise from them. Free, for the most part, from affectations, Clark achieves an unusual ease in his use of the local vernacular.

THE GLORY TRAIL[1]

'Way high up the Mogollons,[2]
  Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
  And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
  A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
  And mav'rick-hungry rope.

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[1] From *Sun and Saddle Leather* by Badger Clark. Copyright, 1915. Richard G. Badger, Publisher.

[2] Pronounced Mokiónes.

"Oh, glory be to me," says he
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse today
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J —
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"

That lion licked his paw so brown
And dreamed soft dreams of veal —
And then the circlin' loop sung down
And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
And Bob caught up the slack.

"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We've hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we've told the tale."

'Way high up the Mogollons,
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest.
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly-roped
But healthy, loped behind.

"Oh, glory be to me," grunts he.
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn,
For never any hero born
Could stop to holler: 'Nuff!'"

Three suns had rode their circle home
  Beyond the desert's rim,
And turned their star-herds loose to roam
  The ranges high and dim;
Yet up and down and 'round and 'cross
  Bob pounded, weak and wan,
For pride still glued him to his hawse
  And glory drove him on.

"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.
  "He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about
Was only fools that stuck it out
  To end of mortal breath."

'Way high up the Mogollons
  A prospect man did swear
That moonbeams melted down his bones
  And hoisted up his hair:
A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,
  A lion trailed along,
A rider ga'nt but chin on high,
  Yelled out a crazy song.

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,
  "And to my noble noose!
Oh, stranger, tell my pards below
I took a rampin' dream in tow,
And if I never lay him low,
  I'll never turn him loose!"

HARRY KEMP

Harry (Hibbard) Kemp, known as "the tramp-poet," was born at Youngstown, Ohio, December 15, 1883. He came East at the age of twelve, left school to enter a factory, but returned to high school to study English.

A globe-trotter by nature, he went to sea before finishing his high school course. He shipped first to Australia, then to China, from China to California, from California to the University of Kansas. After a few months in London in 1909 (he crossed the Atlantic as a stowaway) he returned to New York City, where he has lived ever since, founding his own theater in which he is actor, stage-manager, playwright and chorus.

His first collection of poems, *The Cry of Youth* (1914), like the subsequent volume, *The Passing God* (1919), is full of every kind of poetry except the kind one might imagine Kemp would write. Instead of crude and boisterous verse, here is a precise and almost over-polished poetry. *Chanteys and Ballads* (1920) and *The Sea and the Dunes* (1926) are riper and more representative collections. The notes are more varied, the sense of personality is more pronounced.

Kemp's autobiographical novel, *Tramping on Life*, was followed by a sequel, *More Miles* (1927).

CAPE'S END

There is battle here, there is clean and vigorous war,
There are bivouacs visited by night's every star,
There are long, barren slopes of encampment burned clean
by the sun,
And ramparts of strange new dreams to be stormed and won.
Here the five-petalled wild rose blossoms more sweet
Because the earth is barren and the heat
Intolerable for lush, domestic grass;
The ocean shines like many disks of brass,
Or between white hollows it lapses, great and green
Where solitude sifts slowly in between
The hills of sparkling waste and rise and fall —
Hills whose one music is the sea bird's call! . . .
And here is all space that ever eye can see:
The ocean completing all immensity,
And the sky, mother of infinity —
Yet greatness on smallness jostles till both are one
And a grain of sand stands doorkeeper to the sun.

Eunice Tietjens (née Hammond) was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 29, 1884. She married Paul Tietjens, the composer, in 1904. During 1914 and 1916 she was Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* and went to France as war correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News* (1917–18). Her second marriage (to Cloyd Head, the writer) occurred in February, 1920.

Profiles from China (1917) is a series of sketches of people, scenes and incidents observed in the interior. Written in a fluent free verse, the poems in this collection are alive with color and personality. The succeeding *Body and Raiment* (1919) is less integrated, more derivative and diffuse. And yet, in spite of certain obvious echoes, individual poems, like "The Drug Clerk," and a few others are worthy to stand beside her first volume.

Profiles from Home (1925) attempts to do for the United States what Mrs. Tietjens' first volume did for China. It is, unfortunately, as disappointing as its predecessor was distinguished.

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry,
After the slow six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity — a swift, white peace, a presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene,
He stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.

The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says:
On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below.

The stone grows old.
Eternity
Is not for stones.
But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white peace, this stinging exultation;
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
And always I shall feel time ravel thin about me.
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

SARA TEASDALE

Sara Teasdale was born August 8, 1884, at St. Louis, Missouri, and educated there. After leaving school, she traveled in Europe and the Near East. In 1914, she married Ernst B. Filsinger, who has written several books on foreign trade, and moved to New York City in 1916.

Her first book was a slight volume, *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), giving little promise of the rich lyricism which was to follow. *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911) contains the first hints of that delicate craftsmanship and authentic loveliness which, later, were brought to such a high pitch.

Rivers to the Sea (1915) emphasizes this poet's singing intensity as well as her epigrammatic skill. But a greater restraint is here. The new collection contains at least a dozen unforgettable snatches, lyrics in which the words seem to fall into place without art or effort. Seldom employing metaphor or striking imagery, almost bare of ornament, these poems have the sheer magic of triumphant song. Theirs is an artlessness that is more than an art.

Love Songs (1917) is a collection of Miss Teasdale's previous melodies for the *viola d'amore* together with several new tunes. *Flame and Shadow* (1920) and the more autumnal *Dark of the Moon* (1926) are, however, by far the best of her books. Here the beauty is fuller and deeper; an almost mystic radiance plays from these starry verses. Technically, also, these volumes mark Miss Teasdale's greatest advance. The words are chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical values; the rhythms are much more subtle and varied; the lines move with a greater naturalness.

Besides her own books, Miss Teasdale has compiled an anthology, *The Answering Voice* (1917), comprising one hundred love lyrics by women, and a collection for children, *Rainbow Gold* (1922).

SPRING NIGHT[1]

The park is filled with night and fog,
  The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
  Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
  Gold and gleaming the misty lake.
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
  Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied, —
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light, —
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale.

I SHALL NOT CARE[1]

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI[1]

I asked the heaven of stars
What should I give my love —
It answered me with silence,
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
Down where the fishermen go —
It answered me with silence,
Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
Or I could give him song —
But how can I give silence
My whole life long?

WATER LILIES[2]

If you have forgotten water-lilies floating
On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
Then you can return and not be afraid.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

[2] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Flame and Shadow* by Sara Teasdale.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water lilies,
And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

TWO SONGS FOR SOLITUDE[1]

The Crystal Gazer

I shall gather myself into myself again,
I shall take my scattered selves and make them one,
I shall fuse them into a polished crystal ball
Where I can see the moon and the flashing sun.

I shall sit like a sibyl, hour after hour intent,
Watching the future come and the present go —
And the little shifting pictures of people rushing
In tiny self-importance to and fro.

The Solitary

Let them think I love them more than I do,
Let them think I care, though I go alone,
If it lifts their pride, what is it to me
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone?

It is one to me that they come or go
If I have myself and the drive of my will,
And strength to climb on a summer night
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

My heart has grown rich with the passing of years,
I have less need now than when I was young
To share myself with every comer,
Or shape my thoughts into words with my tongue.

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[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Dark of the Moon* by Sara Teasdale.

Wilbert Snow was born April 6, 1884, on White Head Island, off the coast of Maine. His early years were spent in his own state; he became, at various times, a lobster-catcher, a deep-sea fisherman, a sailor, a country school teacher (all in Maine) and an Eskimo and reindeer agent for the Department of the Interior in Alaska. Graduating from Bowdoin College in 1907, he obtained his M.A. at Columbia University in 1910 and taught English subsequently at seven American colleges.

Maine Coast (1923) and *The Inner Harbor* (1926) manifest Snow's obvious though perhaps unconscious debt to Robert Frost. But beneath the surface derivations there is much that comes straight from Snow's own experience and observation. In connection with the poem here reprinted, a reading of "Advice to a Clam-Digger" and "A Northeaster" will reveal this poet's background and give a more complete presentation of his characteristics.

TAKING AWAY THE BANKING

When March winds carried prophecies of June,
And gray days were no longer winter-killed,
We all went out and worked till afternoon
To take the spruce-limb banking off, and filled
The air with shouts, heaping what soon would be
A bonfire blazing by the willow-tree.

We tugged at big ends of the bottom brush,
The small ends as reluctant to let go
As winter was himself, although the rush
Of warmth, once started, was an overflow
Of sunny days, blue-birds, and brooklets racing
Like children from worn mothers, tired of chasing.

We found that spring already underneath
Had started on his work; the light-brown grasses
Were flaunting spots of green, the little teeth
Of mice and snouts of worms had chiseled passes —
Worms we sent wiggling as a tempting cud
For hungry flounders coming out of mud.

O, there were ugly days enough to come,
With rain and sleet and April fluffs of snow,
Big winds that moaned and made the wires hum,
And neighbors calling out, "We told you so!"
But looking on it now I think the days
We coaxed the spring along, and felt the rays

Of March intensify the balsam smell
In those green boughs, and saw the underpinning
Exposed once more, and children run pellmell
To hunt for crocuses, set fancies spinning
More rapidly than blooming hours of May
When all the hills of God kept holiday.

EZRA POUND

Ezra (Loomis) Pound was born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885; attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania and went abroad, seeking fresh material to complete a thesis on Lope de Vega, in 1908.

It was in Venice that Pound's first book, *A Lume Spento* (1908), was printed. The following year Pound went to London and the chief poems of the little volume were incorporated in *Personæ* (1909), a small collection containing some of Pound's finest work.

Although the young American was a total stranger to the English literary world, his book made a definite impression on critics of all shades. Edward Thomas, the English poet and one of the most careful appraisers, wrote, "The beauty of it is the beauty of passion, sincerity and intensity, not of beautiful words and suggestions. . . . The thought dominates the words and is greater than they are."

Exultations (1909) was printed in the autumn of the same year that saw the appearance of *Personæ*. Too often in his later work, Pound seems to be more the archæologist than the artist, digging with little energy and less enthusiasm. *Canzoni* (1911) and *Ripostes* (1912) both contain much that is sharp and living; they also contain the germs of desiccation and decay. Pound began to scatter his talents; to start movements which he quickly discarded for new ones; to spend himself in poetic propaganda for the Imagists and others (see Preface); to give more and more time to translation. A general collection of his best work up to 1926 (including the panoramic Cantos) was published under the former title *Personæ* (1927).

Too special to achieve permanence, too intellectual to become popular, Pound's contribution to his age should not be underestimated. He was a pioneer in the new forms; under his leadership, the Imagists became not only a group but a protest; he helped to make many of the paths which a score of unconsciously influenced poets tread today with more ease but far less grace.

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I still have the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man —
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus'
pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed —
  His dice be not of ruth.
For I am made as a naked blade,
  But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
  Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
  But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
  Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the
    veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Louis Untermeyer was born October 1, 1885, in New York City, where he has lived, except for brief sojourns in Maine and New Jersey, ever since. His education was sketchy; his continued failure to comprehend geometry kept him from entering college. In 1923 he went abroad and, after two years in Europe, returned to devote himself entirely to literature.

Untermeyer's first volume was *The Younger Quire* (1911), a twenty-four-page burlesque of an anthology (*The Younger Choir*). It was issued anonymously and only one hundred copies were printed. Later in the same year, he published a sequence of some seventy lyrics entitled *First Love* (1911). With the exception of about five of these songs, the volume is devoid of character and, in spite of a certain technical facility, wholly undistinguished.

It was with *Challenge* (1914) that the author first spoke in his own idiom. Poems like "Summons" and "Caliban in the Coal Mines" show "a fresh and lyrical concern not only with a mechanistic society but with the modern world." "His vision" (thus the Boston *Transcript*) "is a social vision, his spirit a passionately energized command of the forces of justice."

Challenge was succeeded by *These Times* (1917), evidently an "interval" book which, lacking the concentration and unity of the better-known collection, sought for larger horizons. *The New Adam* (1920) is equally disintegrated, the poems alternating between separate successes and experimental failures. *Roast Leviathan* (1923) is the largest of the volumes, a more satisfactory unit. Here the varied passions are fused in a new heat. *Burning Bush* (1928) is by far the quietest and the surest of his poetry, no longer dependent on loud adjectives or merely muscular epithets.

Besides serious poetry, Untermeyer has published three volumes of critical parodies: "*— and Other Poets*" (1917), *Including Horace* (1919) and *Heavens* (1922), the three books, with some thirty new satirical pieces, being assembled in *Collected Parodies* (1926). He has also printed a strict metrical translation of three hundred and twenty-five *Poems of Heinrich Heine* (1917); a volume of prose criticism, *American Poetry Since 1900* (1923); and three textbooks. Besides this collection, he has arranged and edited several anthologies, including *This Singing World* (1923) and *Yesterday and Today* (1926). *The Forms of Poetry* (1926) is "a pocket dictionary of verse." He was one of the Associate Editors of *The Seven Arts* (1916–17) and has lectured at various universities throughout the United States.

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

God, we don't like to complain,
  We know that the mine is no lark.
But — there's the pools from the rain;
  But — there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is —
  You, in Your well-lighted sky —
Watching the meteors whizz;
  Warm, with the sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
  Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
  Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
  And nothing that moves but the cars . . .
God, if You wish for our love,
  Fling us a handful of stars!

SUMMONS

The eager night and the impetuous winds,
The hints and whispers of a thousand lures,
And all the swift persuasion of the Spring,
Surged from the stars and stones, and swept me on . . .
The smell of honeysuckle, keen and clear,
Startled and shook me, with the sudden thrill
Of some well-known but half-forgotten voice.
A slender stream became a naked sprite,
Flashed around curious bends, and winked at me
Beyond the turns, alert and mischievous.
A saffron moon, dangling among the trees,
Seemed like a toy balloon caught in the boughs,
Flung there in sport by some too mirthful breeze . . .

And as it hung there, vivid and unreal,
The whole world's lethargy was brushed away;
The night kept tugging at my torpid mood
And tore it into shreds. A warm air blew
My wintry slothfulness beyond the stars;
And over all indifference there streamed
A myriad urges in one rushing wave . . .

Touched with the lavish miracles of earth,
I felt the brave persistence of the grass;
The far desire of rivulets; the keen,
Unconquerable fervor of the thrush;

The endless labors of the patient worm;
The lichen's strength; the prowess of the ant;
The constancy of flowers; the blind belief
Of ivy climbing slowly toward the sun;
The eternal struggles and eternal deaths —
And yet the groping faith of every root!
Out of old graves arose the cry of life;
Our of the dying came the deathless call.
And, thrilling with a new sweet restlessness,
The thing that was my boyhood woke in me —
Dear, foolish fragments made me strong again;
Valiant adventures, dreams of those to come,
And all the vague, heroic hopes of youth,
With fresh abandon, like a fearless laugh,
Leaped up to face the heavens' unconcern. . . .

And then — veil upon veil was torn aside —
Stars, like a host of merry girls and boys,
Danced gaily 'round me, plucking at my hand.
The night, scorning its stubborn mystery,
Leaned down and pressed new courage in my heart.
The hermit-thrush, throbbing with more than Song,
Sang with a happy challenge to the skies.
Love and the faces of a world of children
Swept like a conquering army through my blood.
And Beauty, rising out of all its forms,
Flamed with its joy, a thing too great for tears,
And, like a wine, poured itself out for me
To drink of, to be warmed with, and to go
Refreshed and strengthened to the ceaseless fight;
To meet with confidence the cynic years;
Battling in wars that never can be won,
Seeking the lost cause and the brave defeat.

ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Lo — to the battle-ground of Life,
  Child, you have come, like a conquering shout,

Out of a struggle — into strife;
  Out of a darkness — into doubt.

Girt with the fragile armor of Youth,
  Child, you must ride into endless wars,
With the sword of protest, the buckler of truth,
  And a banner of love to sweep the stars.

About you the world's despair will surge;
  Into defeat you must plunge and grope —
Be to the faltering, an urge;
  Be to the hopeless years, a hope!

Be to the darkened world, a flame;
  Be to its unconcern a blow!
For out of its pain and tumult you came,
  And into its tumult and pain you go.

STAND WITH ME HERE

Stand with me here and listen. Close your lips.
  The world is shut out by these pasture-bars.
We cannot heal our wounds; our words are whips
  That flay half-opened scars.

Stand where the sun strokes the contented turf,
And listen to the mumbling surf
Of bees among the buckwheat, the consoling
Silence of rocks among the rolling
Bluster of winds. Let this grave-bosomed cloud
Press through your anger till the proud
Passions that rend are crumbled down and pass
Into the humble pride of grass.
Your fire need not be smothered; you will learn
How to preserve that flame and burn
Quietly as the unaffected glow
Of partridge-berries in the snow.
Here is fulfilment. This old mullein stalk
Has more of life than all our talk;

And here, poised on this windy poplar tree,
Mocking our insecurity,
Is — plain as milk and bolder than belief —
The confident laughter of a leaf.

Open your lips again. The wordy wars
  And all the aftermath of hate and fear
Are shut out by two broken pasture-bars.
  Stand with me here.

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
  Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
  Give me the heart to fight — and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
  Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
  And fill we with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
  With beauty, and with wonder lit —
But let me always see the dirt,
  And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
  Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums —
But never let me dare forget
  The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,
  Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
And when, at last, the fight is won,
  God, keep me still unsatisfied.

Jean Starr was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 13, 1886, and educated at the Putnam Seminary in the city of her birth. At sixteen, she came to New York City, pursuing special studies at Columbia. In 1907 she married Louis Untermeyer and, although she had written some prose previous to the poetic renascence, her first volume was published more than ten years later.

Growing Pains (1918) is a thin book of thirty-four poems, the result of eight years' slow and self-critical creation. Perfection is almost a passion with her; the first poem in the book declares:

> I would rather work in stubborn rock
> All the years of my life;
> And make one strong thing
> And set it in a high, clean place,
> To recall the granite strength of my desire.

But it is not only her keen search for truth and an equally keen eye for the exact word that make these poems distinctive. A sharp color sense, a surprising whimsicality, a translation of the ordinary in terms of the beautiful, illumine such poems as "Sinfonia Domestica" and "Autumn." Her purely pictorial poems establish a swift kinship between the most romantic and the most prosaic objects.

Dreams Out of Darkness (1921) and *Steep Ascent* (1927) reveal an intensification and ripening of this author's powers with a richer musical undercurrent. This increase of melody is manifest on every page, possibly most obvious in the persuasive music and symbolism of "Lake Song." As in the case of Kreymborg and other writers of free verse, practically all of Mrs. Untermeyer's later poetry is in rhyme and a definitely regular rhythm.

AUTUMN

(*To My Mother*)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them:
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And, in the very center of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by the wagon-load,
Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness — to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness under a grey dust,
Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enamelled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .

And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power —
You, now so shaken and so powerless —
High priestess of your home.

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms.
Here is languid, luxurious wailing;
The wailing of kings' daughters.

So do we ever cry,
A soft, unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

ONE KIND OF HUMILITY

Shall we say heaven is not heaven
Since golden stairs are rugged and uneven?

Or that no light illuminates a star
That swings in other regions than we are?

Deny with soured breath enduring God
Because we cling so rankly to the sod?

No. Cleanse with weeping, fasting and with prayer.
Praise God. Look starward. Mount the stair!

John Gould Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy (Andover, Massachusetts) and Harvard (1903–7) and, after spending several years in Massachusetts, moved to England, where, except for brief visits to the United States, he has lived ever since.

In 1913, Fletcher published five tiny books of poems which he has referred to as his "literary wild oats," five early collections of experimental and faintly interesting verse. Two years later, Fletcher appeared as a decidedly less conservative and far more arresting poet with *Irradiations — Sand and Spray* (1915). This volume is full of an extraordinary fancy; imagination riots through it, even though it is often a bloodless and bodiless imagination.

In the following book, *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), Fletcher carries his unrelated harmonies much further. Color dominates him; the ambitious set of eleven "color symphonies" is an elaborate design in which the tone as well as the thought is summoned by color-associations, sometimes closely related, sometimes suggested and implied.

Meanwhile, Fletcher had been developing. After having appeared in the three Imagist anthologies, he sought for depths rather than surfaces. Beginning with his majestic "Lincoln," his work has had a closer relation to humanity; a moving mysticism speaks from *The Tree of Life* (1918), the more native *Granite and Breakers* (1921) and the later uncollected poems. The first part of a projected epic, *Branches of Adam*, was published in London in 1926.

LONDON NIGHTFALL

I saw the shapes that stood upon the clouds:
And they were tiger-breasted, shot with light,
And all of them, lifting long trumpets together,
Blew over the city, for the night to come.
Down in the street, we floundered in the mud;
Above, in endless files, gold angels came
And stood upon the clouds, and blew their horns
For night.

Like a wet petal crumpled,
Twilight fell soddenly on the weary city;
The 'busses lurched and groaned,
The shops put up their doors.

But skywards, far aloft,
The angels, vanishing, waved broad plumes of gold,
Summoning spirits from a thousand hills
To pour the thick night out upon the earth.

FROM "IRRADIATIONS"

The trees, like great jade elephants,
Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies;
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

. . . .

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the long slope with quivering, quick blades of steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of Earth,
Interlace yourselves tightly over my heart,
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here forever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull, savage jungles,
The while with the other I see the stiff lines of the slope
Break in mid-air, a wave surprisingly arrested, —
And above them, wavering, dancing, bodiless, colorless, unreal,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

LINCOLN[1]

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

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[1] See pages 87, 106, 113, 167, 171, 174.

Ungainly, labouring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring
the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow
darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards
into the earth
Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke
with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what,
and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all
seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing,
seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through
service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring
not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land today,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like labouring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay-fields:
" I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring.
But there were also many things which I left behind.

" Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

" Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sunsetting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamour of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its bright colours.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes — stripes red for the pain that he bore for you —
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers;
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower.

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there, lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver.

Hilda Doolittle was born September 10, 1886, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When she was still a child, her father became Director of the Flower Observatory and the family moved to a suburb in the outskirts of Philadelphia. Hilda Doolittle attended a private school in West Philadelphia; entered Bryn Mawr College in 1904 and went abroad, for what was intended to be a short sojourn, in 1911. After a visit to Italy and France, she came to London, joining Ezra Pound and helping to organize the Imagists. Her work (signed H. D.) began to appear in a few magazines and its unusual quality was recognized at once.

Her first volume, *Sea Garden*, appeared in 1916; her second, *Hymen*, an amplification of her gift, was published in 1921.

H. D. is, by all odds, the most important of her group. She is the only one who has steadfastly held to the letter as well as to the spirit of its *credo*. She is, in fact, the only true Imagist. Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling — beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light, color and emotion that she achieves intensity.

Observe the tiny poem entitled "Heat." Here, in the fewest possible words, is something beyond the description of heat — here is the effect of it. In these lines one feels the very weight and solidity of a midsummer afternoon.

Heliodora (1924) and the exquisite new work in *Collected Poems* (1925) must convince even a casual reader that no more finished craftsman and no more sensitized artist exists in H. D.'s generation.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea —
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us —
Cover us with your pools of fir.

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air —
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat —
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;
no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;
O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

SONG FROM CYPRUS

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
ah, let the night come black,
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire?
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird, we cry,
hear, pity us in pain;
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

William Rose Benét was born at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. He was educated at Albany Academy and graduated from Yale in 1907. After various experiences as free-lance writer, publisher's reader, second lieutenant, etc., Benét became the Associate Editor of the New York *Post's* "Literary Review" in 1920, resigning in 1923 to become one of the editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature.*

The outstanding feature of Benét's verse is its extraordinary whimsicality; an oriental imagination riots through his pages. Like the title-poem of his first volume, *Merchants from Cathay* (1913), all of Benét's volumes vibrate with a vigorous music; they are full of the sonorous stuff that one rolls out crossing wintry fields or tramping a road alone.

But Benét's charm is not confined to the lift and swing of rollicking choruses. His *The Falconer of God* (1914), *The Great White Wall* (1916) and *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (1918) contain decorations as bold as they are brilliant; they ring with a strange and spicy music evoked from seemingly casual words.

Moons of Grandeur (1920) represents the fullest development of Benét's unusual gifts, a combination of Eastern phantasy and Western vigor. The best of Benét's previous volumes as well as a group of new poems were selected for *Man Possessed* (1927), a volume that, in cumulative detail, reveals a most colorful versatility.

MERCHANTS FROM CATHAY

How that They came.

Their heels slapped their bumping mules; their fat chaps glowed.
Glory unto Mary, each seemed to wear a crown!
Like sunset their robes were on the wide, white road:
So we saw those mad merchants come dusting into town!

Of their Beasts.

Two paunchy beasts they rode on and two they drove before.
May the Saints all help us, the tiger-stripes they had!
And the panniers upon them swelled full of stuffs and ore!
The square buzzed and jostled at a sight so mad.

And their Boast,

They bawled in their beards, and their turbans they wried.
They stopped by the stalls with curvetting and clatter.
As bronze as the bracken their necks and faces dyed —
And a stave they sat singing, to tell us of the matter.

With its Burthen

For your silks to Sugarmago! For your dyes to Isfahan!
Weird fruits from the Isle o' Lamaree.
But for magic merchandise, for treasure-trove and spice,
" Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!

And Chorus.

" Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan;

For we won through the deserts to his sunset barbican;
And the mountains of his palace no Titan's reach may span
Where he wields his seignorie!

A first Stave Fearsome,

" Red-as-blood skins of Panthers, so bright against the sun
On the walls of the halls where his pillared state is set
They daze with the blaze no man may look upon.
And with conduits of beverage those floors run wet.

And a second Right hard To stomach

" His wives stiff with riches, they sit before him there.
Bird and beast at his feast make song and clapping cheer.
And jugglers and enchanters, all walking on the air,
Make fall eclipse and thunder — make moons and suns appear!

And a third, Which is a Laughable Thing.

" Once the Chan, by his enemies sore-prest, and sorely spent,
Lay, so they say, in a thicket 'neath a tree
Where the howl of an owl vexed his foes from their intent:
Then that fowl for a holy bird of reverence made he!

We gape to Hear them end,

" *A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan!*
Pastmasters of disasters, our desert caravan
Won through all peril to his sunset barbican,
Where he wields his seignorie!
And crowns he gave us! We end where we began:

A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan.
The King of all the Kings across the sea!"

And are in Terror,

Those mad, antic Merchants! . . . Their stripèd beasts did beat
The market-square suddenly with hooves of beaten gold!
The ground yawned gaping and flamed beneath our feet!
They plunged to Pits Abysmal with their wealth untold!

And dread it is Devil's Work!

And some say the Chan himself in anger dealt the stroke —
For sharing of his secrets with silly, common folk:
But Holy, Blessed Mary, preserve us as you may
Lest once more those mad Merchants come chanting from Cathay!

JESSE JAMES[1]

(*A Design in Red and Yellow for a Nickel Library*)

Jesse James was a two-gun man,
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
Strong-arm chief of an outlaw clan.
(*From Kansas to Illinois!*)
He twirled an old Colt forty-five;
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
They never took Jesse James alive.
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)

Jesse James was King of the Wes';
(*Cataracts in the Missouri!*)
He'd a di'mon' heart in his lef' breas';
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)

---

[1] From *Man Possessed* by William Rose Benét. Copyright, 1927, by George H. Doran Company.

He'd a fire in his heart no hurt could stifle;
(*Thunder, Missouri!*)
Lion eyes an' a Winchester rifle.
(*Missouri, roll down!*)

Jesse James rode a pinto hawse;
Come at night to a water-cawse;
Tetched with the rowel that pinto's flank;
She sprung the torrent from bank to bank.

Jesse rode through a sleepin' town;
Looked the moonlit street both up an' down;
Crack-crack-crack, the street ran flames
An' a great voice cried, " I'm Jesse James! "

Hawse an' afoot they're after Jess!
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
Spurrin' an' spurrin' — but he's gone Wes'.
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)
He was ten foot tall when he stood in his boots;
(*Lightnin' like the Missouri!*)
More'n a match fer sich galoots.
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)

Jesse James rode outa the sage;
Roun' the rocks come the swayin' stage;
Straddlin' the road a giant stan's
An' a great voice bellers, " Throw up yer han's! "

Jesse raked in the di'mon' rings,
The big gold watches an' the yuther things;
Jesse divvied 'em then an' thar
With a cryin' child had lost her mar.

They're creepin'; they're crawlin', they're stalkin' Jess;
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
They's a rumor he's gone much further Wes';
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)

They's word of a cayuse hitched to the bars
(*Ruddy clouds on Missouri!*)
Of a golden sunset that busts into stars.
(*Missouri, roll down!*)

Jesse James rode hell fer leather;
He was a hawse an' a man together;
In a cave in a mountain high up in air
He lived with a rattlesnake, a wolf, an' a bear.

Jesse's heart was as sof' as a woman;
Fer guts an' stren'th he was sooper-human;
He could put six shots through a woodpecker's eye
And take in one swaller a gallon o' rye.

They sought him here an' they sought him there,
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
But he strides by night through the ways of the air;
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)
They say he was took an' they say he is dead,
(*Thunder, Missouri!*)
But he ain't — he's a sunset overhead!
(*Missouri down to the sea!*)

Jesse James was a Hercules.
When he went through the woods he tore up the trees.
When he went on the plains he smoked the groun'
An' the hull lan' shuddered fer miles aroun'.

Jesse James wore a red bandanner
That waved on the breeze like the Star Spangled Banner;
In seven states he cut up dadoes.
He's gone with the buffler an' the desperadoes.

Yes, Jesse James was a two-gun man
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
The same as when this song began;
(*From Kansas to Illinois!*)

An' when you see a sunset bust into flames
(*Lightnin' like the Missouri!*)
Or a thunderstorm blaze — that's Jesse James!
(*Hear that Missouri roll!*)

ELINOR WYLIE

Elinor (Hoyt) Wylie was born in Somerville, New Jersey, but she is, she protests, completely a Pennsylvanian by inheritance. On both sides she can trace her ancestry back through old American families. A grandfather was Governor of Pennsylvania, her father was solicitor-general in Roosevelt's administration. Her girlhood was passed in Washington, D. C. After several years abroad, she returned to America, moved to New York and married William Rose Benét in 1924.

Nets to Catch the Wind (1921) is one of the most brilliant first volumes published in recent years. This brilliance is one which, at first, seems to sparkle without burning. In several of the poems the author achieves a frigid ecstasy; emotion is never absent from her lines, but too frequently it seems a passion frozen at its source. It is the brilliance of moonlight flashing on a plain of ice. But if Mrs. Wylie seldom allows her verses to become heated, she never permits them to remain dull. As a technician, she is always admirable; as in "The Eagle and the Mole," she can lift didacticism to a breathless level.

Black Armour (1923) exhibits Mrs. Wylie's dramatic keenness against a mellower background. The beauty evoked in this volume no longer has "the hard heart of a child." As the intellect has grown more fiery, the mood has grown warmer while the craftsmanship is more dazzling than ever. This devotee of severe elegance has perfected an accent which is both brusque and patrician; she varies the perfect modulation with rhymes that are delightfully acrid and unexpected.

Her prose is scarcely less distinguished. *Jennifer Lorn* (1923), which Mrs. Wylie has subtitled "A Sedate Extravaganza," *The Venetian Glass Nephew* (1925) and *The Orphan Angel* (1926), in which Mrs. Wylie pays a fantastic tribute to Shelley, juggle a harlequin style adroitly. Hers is a deft artifice and an iridescent language that could only spring from an unusually "jewelled brain."

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

SEA LULLABY

The old moon is tarnished
With smoke of the flood,
The dead leaves are varnished
With color like blood,

A treacherous smiler
With teeth white as milk,
A savage beguiler
In sheathings of silk,

The sea creeps to pillage,
She leaps on her prey;
A child of the village
Was murdered today.

She came up to meet him
In a smooth golden cloak,
She choked him and beat him
To death, for a joke.

Her bright locks were tangled,
She shouted for joy,
With one hand she strangled
A strong little boy.

Now in silence she lingers
Beside him all night
To wash her long fingers
In silvery light.

SONNET

Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones
There's something in this richness that I hate.
I love the look, austere, immaculate,
Of landscapes drawn in pearly monotones.
There's something in my very blood that owns
Bare hills, cold silver on a sky of slate,
A thread of water, churned to milky spate
Streaming through slanted pastures fenced with stones.

I love those skies, thin blue or snowy gray,
Those fields sparse-planted, rendering meager sheaves;
That spring, briefer than apple-blossom's breath;
Summer, so much too beautiful to stay;
Swift autumn, like a bonfire of leaves;
And sleepy winter, like the sleep of death.

John Hall Wheelock was born at Far Rockaway, Long Island, in 1886. He was graduated from Harvard, receiving his B.A. in 1908, and finished his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, 1908–10.

Wheelock's first book is, in many respects, his best. *The Human Fantasy* (1911) sings with the voice of youth — a youth which is vibrantly in love with existence. Rhapsodic and obviously influenced by Whitman and Henley, these lines beat bravely. A headlong ecstasy rises from pages whose refrain is "Splendid it is to live and glorious to die."

Wheelock's subsequent volumes are less individualized. *Love and Liberation* (1913) and *Dust and Light* (1919) are long dilutions of the earlier strain. The music is still here, but most of the magic has gone. *The Black Panther* (1922), however, furnishes evidence that though Wheelock's star may have waned it did not die. *The Bright Doom* (1927) achieves a greater dignity; the flashing athleticism has matured into a steady fervor, the passionate exulting has grown into a spiritualizing of passion.

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look — on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seen vague and dim;
There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
— The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

LOVE AND LIBERATION

Lift your arms to the stars
And give an immortal shout;
Not all the veils of darkness
Can put your beauty out!

You are armed with love, with love,
Nor all the powers of Fate
Can touch you with a spear,
Nor all the hands of hate.

What of good and evil,
Hell and Heaven above—
Trample them with love!
Ride over them with love!

JOYCE KILMER

(Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886. He was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904 and received his A.B. from Columbia in 1906.

In 1917 Kilmer joined the Officers' Reserve Training Corps, but he soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after America entered the World War, he enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, New York.

On July 28, 1918, the five-day battle for the mastery of the heights beyond the river Ourcq was begun. Two days later, Sergeant Kilmer was killed in action.

Death came before the poet had developed or even matured his gifts. His first volume, *Summer of Love* (1911), is wholly imitative; it is full of reflections of a dozen other sources, "a broken bundle of mirrors." *Trees and Other Poems* (1914) contains the title-poem by which Kilmer is best known and, though various influences are here, a refreshing candor lights up the lines. *Main Street and Other Poems* (1917) is less derivative; the simplicity is less self-conscious, the ecstasy more spontaneous.

TREES[1]

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

MARTIN[1]

When I am tired of earnest men,
  Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen
  Or counting metal discs forever,
Then from the halls of shadowland
  Beyond the trackless purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
  Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
  A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
  His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.

---

[1] From *Trees and Other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft gray hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good, that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.
How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the bleak and sombre earth.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled, —
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave;
His heart was merry as his dress.
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
Who did not gain, but was, success.

ORRICK JOHNS

Orrick Johns was born at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1887. He schooled himself to be an advertising copy writer, his creative work being kept as an avocation.

Asphalt and Other Poems (1917) is a queer mixture. Cheap stanzas crowd against lines of singular beauty. The same peculiarity is evident in *Black Branches* (1920), where much that is strained and artificial mingles with poetry that is not only spontaneous but searching. At his best, notably in the refreshing "Country Rhymes," Johns is a true and poignant singer.

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning when the light was low
She got all together and she went like snow,
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill,
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydids and frogs
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for anyone to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she too knew much . . .
And always when anyone has time to call his own,
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

ROBINSON JEFFERS

Robinson Jeffers' condensed autobiography runs as follows: "Born in Pittsburgh in 1887; my parents carried me about Europe a good deal; of the first visit I remember three things — a pocketful of snails loosed on the walls of a kindergarten in Zürich, paintings of Keats and Shelley hanging side by side somewhere in London, and Arthur's Seat, the hill about Edinburgh. When I was fifteen I was brought home. Next year my family moved to California and I graduated at eighteen from Occidental College, Los Angeles. After that, desultory years at the University of Southern California, University of Zürich, Medical School in Los Angeles, University of Washington, but with faint interest. I wasn't deeply interested in anything but poetry.

"I married Una Call Kuster in 1913. We were going to England in the autumn of 1914. But the August news turned us to this village of Carmel instead; and when the stagecoach topped the hill from

Monterey, and we looked down through pines and sea-fogs on Carmel Bay, it was evident that we had come without knowing it to our inevitable place."

Flagons and Apples (1912) was Jeffers' undistinguished first volume; it was followed by *Californians* (1916), a scarcely more distinctive book. In 1925 *Tamar and Other Poems* was brought out by a small printer and caused an overnight sensation. It was reprinted the following year, with the addition of new poems, as *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1926). This, it was evident at once, was masculine poetry, stark, even terrible in its intensities. Whatever defects this verse has — and it must be confessed that Jeffers piles on his catastrophes with little humor and less restraint — there is no denying its elemental power. He combines two almost contrary types of strength: the rude American and the stoic Greek. The best of his long poems read like fragments of Sophocles rewritten by Walt Whitman.

The Women of Sur Point (1927) shows again how easily Jeffers can swing the long line, how suddenly his phrases soar from the tawdry into the ecstatic, how boldly he can lift a language which, in the hands of most poets, would be nothing more than wild rhetoric.

A monograph *Robinson Jeffers: The Man and the Artist* (1926) was completed by another poet, George Sterling, just before Sterling's death.

AGE IN PROSPECT

Praise youth's hot blood if you will, I think that happiness
Rather consists in having lived clear through
Youth and hot blood, on to the wintrier hemisphere
Where one has time to wait and remember.

Youth and hot blood are beautiful, so is peacefulness.
Youth had some islands in it but age is indeed
An island and a peak; age has infirmities,
Not few, but youth is all one fever.

And there is no possession more sure than memory's;
But if I reach that gray island, that peak,
My hope is still to possess with eyes the homeliness
Of ancient loves, ocean and mountains,

And meditate the sea-mouth of mortality
And the fountain six feet down with a quieter thirst
Than now I feel for old age; a creature progressively
Thirsty for life will be for death too.

COMPENSATION

Solitude that unmakes me one of men
In snowwhite hands brings singular recompense,
Evening me with kindlier natures when
On the needled pinewood the cold dews condense
About the hour of Rigel fallen from heaven
In wintertime, or when the long night tides
Sigh blindly from the sand dune backward driven,
Or when on stormwings of the northwind rides
The foamscud with the cormorants, or when passes
A horse or dog with brown affectionate eyes,
Or autumn frosts are pricked by earliest grasses,
Or whirring from her covert a quail flies.
Why, even in humanity beauty and good
Show, from the mountainside of solitude.

ROY HELTON

Roy Helton was born in Washington, D. C., in 1887. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. He studied art — and found he was color-blind. He spent two years at inventions — and found he had no business sense. After a few more experiments he became a schoolmaster in West Philadelphia.

Helton's first volume, *Youth's Pilgrimage* (1915), is a strange, mystical affair, full of vague symbolism with a few purple patches. *Outcasts in Beulah Land* (1918) is entirely different in theme and treatment. This is a much starker verse; a poetry of city streets, direct and sharp. Since this volume Helton has become more intimately connected with primitive backgrounds, spending a great part of his time in the mountains of South Carolina and Kentucky.

OLD CHRISTMAS MORNING

(A Kentucky Mountain Ballad)

“ Where you coming from, Lomey Carter,
  So airly over the snow?
And what’s them pretties you got in your hand,
  And where you aiming to go?

“ Step in, Honey: Old Christmas morning
  I ain’t got nothing much;
Maybe a bite of sweetness and corn bread,
  A little ham meat and such.

“ But come in, Honey! Sally Anne Barton’s
  Hungering after your face.
Wait till I light my candle up:
  Set down! There’s your old place.

“ Now where you been so airly this morning? ”
  “ Graveyard, Sally Anne.
Up by the trace in the salt lick meadows
  Where Taulbe kilt my man.”

“ Taulbe ain’t to home this morning . . .
  I can’t scratch up a light:
Dampness gets on the heads of the matches;
  But I’ll blow up the embers bright.”

“ Needn’t trouble. I won’t be stopping:
  Going a long ways still.”
“ You didn’t see nothing, Lomey Carter,
  Up on the graveyard hill? ”

“ What should I see there, Sally Anne Barton? ”
  “ Well, sperits do walk last night.”
“ There were an elder bush a-blooming
  While the moon still give some light.”

" Yes, elder bushes, they bloom, Old Christmas,
And critters kneel down in their straw.
Anything else up in the graveyard? "
" One thing more I saw:

" I saw my man with his head all bleeding
Where Taulbe's shot went through."
" What did he say? " " He stooped and kissed me."
" What did he say to you? "

" Said, Lord Jesus forguv your Taulbe;
But he told me another word;
He said it soft when he stooped and kissed me.
That were the last I heard."

" Taulbe ain't to home this morning."
" I know that, Sally Anne,
For I kilt him, coming down through the meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man.

" I met him upon the meadow trace
When the moon were fainting fast,
And I had my dead man's rifle gun
And kilt him as he come past."

" But I heard two shots." " 'Twas his was second:
He shot me 'fore he died:
You'll find us at daybreak, Sally Anne Barton:
I'm laying there dead at his side."

ALAN SEEGER

Alan Seeger was born in New York, June 22, 1888. When he was still a baby, his parents moved to Staten Island, where he remained through boyhood. Later, there were several other migrations, including a sojourn in Mexico, where Seeger spent the most impressionable years of his youth. In 1906, he entered Harvard.

1914 came, and the European war had not entered its third week when, along with some forty of his fellow-countrymen, Seeger enlisted in the Foreign Legion of France. He was in action almost continually, serving on various fronts. On the fourth of July, 1916, ordered to take the village of Belloy-en-Santerre, Seeger advanced in the first rush with his squad, which was practically wiped out by hidden machine-gun fire. Seeger fell, mortally wounded, and died the next morning.

Seeger's literary promise was far greater than his poetic accomplishment. With the exception of his famous and prophetic poem, there is little of importance, though much of charm, in his collected *Poems* published, with an Introduction by William Archer, in 1916

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH"[1]

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air —
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.
It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath —
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town;
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

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[1] From *Poems* by Alan Seeger. Copyright, 1916, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

John Crowe Ransom was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, April 30, 1888, of Scotch-Irish descent. Ransom, the son of a local minister, was educated in his own state and abroad: he received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University in 1909, his B.A. at Oxford in 1923. He has taught at Vanderbilt since 1914, except for two years during which he was with the A. E. F. He was the chief instigator and one of the founders of *The Fugitive*, that bravely experimental journal which did much to disprove Mencken's contention that the "solid South" was a vast "Sahara of the Beaux Arts."

Poems About God appeared in 1919, a raw first book with a tang of bitter humor. *Chills and Fever* (1924) and *Two Gentlemen in Bonds* (1927) are much more arresting. Here is a fastidiousness, an almost pedantic precision rare in American letters. As a craftsman Ransom is fascinating as he shifts from tender whimsicality to acrid half-rhymes; as a philosopher he is equally original. Even though his verses are sometimes difficult, there can be no doubt that these crisp narratives and cerebral lyrics will, in spite of their peculiar idiom, find their definite and distinguished place.

LADY LOST

This morning, there flew up the lane
A timid lady-bird to our bird-bath
And eyed her image dolefully as death;
This afternoon, knocked on our windowpane
To be let in from the rain.

And when I caught her eye
She looked aside, but at the clapping thunder
And sight of the whole earth blazing up like tinder
Looked in on us again most miserably,
Indeed as if she would cry.

So I will go out into the park and say,
"Who has lost a delicate brown-eyed lady
In the West End Section? Or has anybody
Injured some fine woman in some dark way,
Last night or yesterday?

"Let the owner come and claim possession,
No questions will be asked. But stroke her gently
With loving words, and she will evidently
Resume her full soft-haired white-breasted fashion,
And her right home and her right passion."

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Margaret Widdemer was born at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and began writing in her childhood. After graduating from Drexel Institute Library School in 1909, she contributed to various magazines.

Miss Widdemer's poetic work has two distinct phases. In the one mood, she is the protesting poet, the champion of the down-trodden, the lyricist on fire with angry passion. In the other, she is the writer of well-made, polite and popular sentimental verse. Her finest poems are in *Factories with Other Lyrics* (1915), although several of her best songs are in *The Old Road to Paradise* (1918), which divided, with Sandburg's *Cornhuskers*, the Pulitzer Poetry Prize in 1918. *Cross Currents* (1921) and *Ballads and Lyrics*(1925) are her most recent collections. *The Singing Wood* is a poetic play and *A Tree with a Bird in It* won the *Literary Review* prizes for satires in 1923.

Miss Widdemer is also the author of two books of short stories, six novels and several books for girls.

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air:
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done —
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?

I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
  I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away —
  Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
  (For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest —
  How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
  I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn —
  God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

ALINE KILMER

Aline (Murray) Kilmer was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1888. Since her youth, she has lived in New York. She was married to Joyce Kilmer in 1909 and, after his death during battle in France, began to deliver lectures, beginning in 1917.

Candles That Burn (1919) reveals a personal as well as poetic warmth. Here is a domesticated flame, a quiet but none the less colorful hearth-fire. By its light, her world is revealed with a quaintly individualized grace. Her poems about her children are particularly well characterized. *Vigils* (1921) and *The Poor King's Daughter* (1925) are more ambitious and even more original offerings. The nimble dexterity of "Unlearning" and the clean fervor of "Things" display Mrs. Kilmer as a distinct poetic personality.

THINGS

Sometimes when I am at tea with you,
  I catch my breath
At a thought that is old as the world is old
  And more bitter than death.

It is that the spoon that you just laid down
  And the cup that you hold

May be here shining and insolent
When you are still and cold.

Your careless note that I laid away
May leap to my eyes like flame,
When the world has almost forgotten your voice
Or the sound of your name.

The golden Virgin da Vinci drew
May smile on over my head,
And daffodils nod in the silver vase
When you are dead.

So let moth and dust corrupt and thieves
Break through and I shall be glad,
Because of the hatred I bear to things
Instead of the love I had.

For life seems only a shuddering breath,
A smothered, desperate cry;
And things have a terrible permanence
When people die.

CONRAD AIKEN

Conrad (Potter) Aiken was born at Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He attended Harvard, receiving his A.B. in 1912, traveled extensively for three years, and since then, he has devoted all his time to literature, living at South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, until 1921, when he moved abroad.

The most outstanding feature of Aiken's creative work is its adaptations of other models transmuted by Aiken's own music. His first volume, *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales in Verse* (1914), is the Keats tradition crossed and paraphrased by Masefield. *Turns and Movies* (1916) is a complete change; in more than half of this book, Aiken begins to speak with his true voice. Here he is the natural musician, playing with new rhythms, haunting cadences, muted philosophy.

Nocturne of Remembered Spring (1917), *The Charnel Rose* (1918) and *The House of Dust* (1920) are packed with a tired but often beautiful music. Primarily a lyric poet, Aiken frequently condenses an emotion in a few lines; some of his best moments are these "lapses" into tune. The music of the Morning Song from "Senlin" (in *Charnel Rose*) is rich with subtleties of rhythm. But it is much more than a lyrical movement. Beneath the flowing color of these lines, there is an enlarging whimsicality, an extraordinary summoning of the immensities that loom behind the casual moments of everyday.

Punch, the Immortal Liar (1921), in many ways Aiken's most appealing work, contains this poet's sharpest characterizations as well as his most beautiful symphonic effects.

Priapus and the Pool (1922) discloses Aiken preëminently as a lyricist. Here are twenty-five songs, several of which are as subtly moving as those of any singer in America today. The succeeding volume, *The Pilgrimage of Festus* (1923), returns to the symphonic form; beneath its imaginative outlines it is an extended essay in epistemology. *Priapus and the Pool*, with a large group of new poems, was reissued in 1926 and contains his deepest poignance.

Besides his poetry, Aiken has written some of the most sensitive criticism of the times, the best of his reviews having been published in *Scepticisms* (1919). He has also edited *Modern American Poets* (1922) and the first *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1924) to appear in England. Lately the poet has turned to a closely woven and strangely unresolved fiction; his volume of introspective short stories, *Bring! Bring!* (1925), and the novel *Blue Voyage* (1927), being in an altogether successful if not entirely new genre.

MIRACLES

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear
The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge boulders beneath seas.

Silent as thought in evening contemplation
Weaves the bat under the gathering stars.
Silent as dew, we seek new incarnation,
Meditate new avatars.

In a clear dusk like this
Mary climbed up the hill to seek her son,

To lower him down from the cross, and kiss
The mauve wounds, every one.

Men with wings
In the dusk walked softly after her.
She did not see them, but may have felt
The winnowed air around her stir;
She did not see them, but may have known
Why her son's body was light as a little stone.
She may have guessed that other hands were there
Moving the watchful air.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.

FROM "THE ARGUMENT"

Do not believe this mighty grief
Is more than breaking of a leaf.
Summer can tear the elder blossom
To redder pain than wounds a bosom.
The numbed bee climbs, and climbs again,
And faints at foot of window-pane.
The sparrow, trammelled in tall grass,
Knows terror deep as Jesus' was.

How wider, how much deeper then,
The comprehensive grief of men,
Who, in the universe of mind,
The law itself of sorrow find!
Although you catch the fainting bee
And on Hymettus set her free,
The multitudes remain, who die
Alone, unheard, on Calvary.

These, though they be unseen, we know:
They help our prize of grief to grow.
How, then, can pain of mindless flowers,
Or panic bird, be great as ours?
Each aching leaf and claw is part
Of that all-sympathizing heart.
All griefs it knows; and then knows too
The grief of knowing that grief is true.

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face! —
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Maxwell Bodenheim was born at Natchez, Mississippi, May 26, 1892. His education, with the exception of grammar school training, was achieved under the guidance of the U. S. Army, in which Bodenheim served a full enlistment of three years, beginning in 1910. In 1918, his first volume appeared and even those who were puzzled or repelled by Bodenheim's complex idiom were forced to recognize its intense individuality.

Minna and Myself (1918), *Advice* (1920) and *Introducing Irony* (1922) reveal, first of all, this poet's sensitivity to words. Words, under his hands, have unexpected growths; placid nouns and sober adjectives bear fantastic fruit. Sometimes he packs his metaphors so close that they become inextricably mixed. Sometimes he spins his fantasies so thin that the cord of coherence snaps and the poem frays into unpatterned ravellings. But, at his best, in the realm of the whimsical-grotesque, Bodenheim walks with a light and nimble footstep.

His more recent work, which includes three novels, is more directly personal; even the titles indicate the attitude: *Against This Age* (1923) and *Returning to Emotion* (1927).

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.
An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then, it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

OLD AGE

In me is a little painted square
Bordered by old shops with gaudy awnings.
And before the shops sit smoking, open-bloused old men,
Drinking sunlight.
The old men are my thoughts;
And I come to them each evening, in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the center of the
    square. . . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and squealing children
Stroll past us, or into the shops.
They greet the shopkeepers and touch their hats or foreheads
    to me. . . .
Some evening I shall not return to my people.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

Edna St. Vincent Millay, possibly the most gifted of the younger lyricists, was born February 22, 1892, at Rockland, Maine. After a childhood spent almost entirely in New England, she attended Vassar College, from which she was graduated in 1917. Since that time she has lived in New York City and abroad.

Although the bulk of her poetry is not large, the quality of it approaches and sometimes attains greatness. Her first long poem, "Renascence," was written when Miss Millay was scarcely nineteen; it remains today one of the most remarkable poems of this generation. Beginning like a child's aimless verse, it proceeds, with a calm lucidity, to an amazing climax. It is as if a child had, in the midst of its ingenuousness, uttered some terrific truth. The cumulative power of this poem is surpassed only by its beauty.

Renascence, Miss Millay's first volume, was published in 1917. It is full of the same passion as its title-poem; here is a hunger for beauty so intense that no delight is great enough to give the soul peace. Such poems as "God's World" and the unnamed sonnets vibrate with this rapture.

Figs from Thistles (1920) is a far more sophisticated booklet.

Sharp and cynically brilliant, Miss Millay's craftsmanship no less than her intuition saves these poems from mere cleverness.

Second April (1921), containing "The Poet and His Book" and the unforgettable "Elegy," is an intensification of her lyrical gift tinctured with an increasing sadness. Her poignant poetic play, *Aria da Capo*, first performed by the Provincetown Players in New York, was published in *The Monthly Chapbook* (England), the issue of July, 1920, being devoted to it.

The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems (1924) — the title-poem was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for 1922 — wears its author's heart on its sleeve; often, in fact, that responsive organ is displayed as a shining toy, a decoration tricked with impudent ribbons. But here Miss Millay begins to wear her heart with a difference. No longer brightly egotistic or consciously arch, she speaks with a disillusion that contains more than a tinge of bitterness. Some of the sonnets must be numbered among her finest creations and are certain to endure.

In 1927 her libretto for Deems Taylor's opera was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House. As a "book" *The King's Henchman* is not free of verbal and dramatic blemishes; as a poetic play it contains passages of moving splendor and pathos.

GOD'S WORLD[1]

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
    Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
    Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
    But never knew I this;
    Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me, — let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

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[1] Reprinted from *Renascence*, published by Harper and Brothers. Copyright, 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

RENASCENCE[1]

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me;
And I could touch them with my hand,
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.
And all at once things seemed so small
My breath came short, and scarce at all.
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;
Miles and miles above my head;
So here upon my back I'll lie
And look my fill into the sky.
And so I looked, and, after all,
The sky was not so very tall.
The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,
And — sure enough! — I see the top!
The sky, I thought, is not so grand;
I 'most could touch it with my hand!
And, reaching up my hand to try,
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.

I screamed, and — lo! — Infinity
Came down and settled over me;
And, pressing of the Undefined
The definition on my mind,

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[1] Reprinted from *Renascence*, published by Harper and Brothers. Copyright, 1917, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Held up before my eyes a glass
Through which my shrinking sight did pass
Until it seemed I must behold
Immensity made manifold;
Whispered to me a word whose sound
Deafened the air for worlds around,
And brought unmuffled to my ears
The gossiping of friendly spheres,
The creaking of the tented sky,
The ticking of Eternity.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past,
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense
That, sick'ning, I would fain pluck thence
But could not, — nay! But needs must suck
At the great wound, and could not pluck
My lips away till I had drawn
All venom out. — Ah, fearful pawn!
For my omniscience I paid toll
In infinite remorse of soul.
All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust,
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,
Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire, —
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each, — then mourned for all!
A man was starving in Capri;
He moved his eyes and looked at me;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.

I saw at sea a great fog-bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote;
And every scream tore through my throat;
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;
Mine, pity like the pity of God.
Ah, awful weight! Infinity
Pressed down upon the finite Me!
My anguished spirit, like a bird,
Beating against my lips I heard;
Yet lay the weight so close about
There was no room for it without.
And so beneath the weight lay I
And suffered death, but could not die.

Long had I lain thus, craving death,
When quietly the earth beneath
Gave way, and inch by inch, so great
At last had grown the crushing weight,
Into the earth I sank till I
Full six feet under ground did lie,
And sank no more,—there is no weight
Can follow here, however great.
From off my breast I felt it roll,
And as it went my tortured soul
Burst forth and fled in such a gust
That all about me swirled the dust.
Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow
And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.
And all at once, and over all,
The pitying rain began to fall.
I lay and heard each pattering hoof
Upon my lowly, thatchèd roof,

And seemed to love the sound far more
Than ever I had done before.
For rain it hath a friendly sound
To one who's six feet underground;
And scarce the friendly voice or face:
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come
And speak to me in my new home.
I would I were alive again
To kiss the fingers of the rain,
To drink into my eyes the shine
Of every slanting silver line,
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.
For soon the shower will be done,
And then the broad face of the sun
Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth
Until the world with answering mirth
Shakes joyously, and each round drop
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.
How can I bear it; buried here,
While overhead the sky grows clear
And blue again after the storm?
O, multi-colored, multiform,
Beloved beauty over me,
That I shall never, never see
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,
That I shall never more behold!
Sleeping your myriad magics through,
Close-sepulchred away from you!
O God, I cried, give me new birth,
And put me back upon the earth!
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
And let the heavy rain, down-poured
In one big torrent, set me free,
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and, through the breathless hush
That answered me, the far-off rush

Of herald wings came whispering
Like music down the vibrant string
Of my ascending prayer, and — crash!
Before the wild wind's whistling lash
The startled storm-clouds reared on high
And plunged in terror down the sky,
And the big rain in one black wave
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.
I know not how such things can be,
I only know there came to me
A fragrance such as never clings
To aught save happy living things;
A sound as of some joyous elf
Singing sweet songs to please himself,
And, through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.
The grass, a tip-toe at my ear,
Whispering to me I could hear;
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips,
Laid gently on my sealèd sight,
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see, —
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,
A last long line of silver rain,
A sky grown clear and blue again.
And as I looked a quickening gust
Of wind blew up to me and thrust
Into my face a miracle
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell, —
I know not how such things can be! —
I breathed my soul back into me.

Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I
And hailed the earth with such a cry
As is not heard save from a man
Who has been dead and lives again.
About the trees my arms I wound;
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;
I raised my quivering arms on high;

I laughed and laughed into the sky,
Till at my throat a strangling sob
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb
Sent instant tears into my eyes;
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky, —
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat — the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

THE PEAR TREE[1]

In this squalid, dirty dooryard,
  Where the chickens scratch and run,
White, incredible, the pear tree
  Stands apart and takes the sun,
Mindful of the eyes upon it,
  Vain of its new holiness,
Like the waste-man's little daughter
  In her first communion dress.

[1] Copyright 1921 by Edna St. Vincent Millay

ELEGY[1]

Let them bury your big eyes
In the secret earth securely,
Your thin fingers, and your fair,
Soft, indefinite-colored hair, —
All of these in some way, surely,
From the secret earth shall rise.
Not for these I sit and stare,
Broken and bereft completely;
Your young flesh that sat so neatly
On your little bones will sweetly
Blossom in the air.

But your voice, — never the rushing
Of a river underground,
Not the rising of the wind
In the trees before the rain,
Not the woodcock's watery call,
Not the note the white-throat utters,
Not the feet of children pushing
Yellow leaves along the gutters
In the blue and bitter fall,
Shall content my musing mind
For the beauty of that sound
That in no new way at all
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk
Of the vigorous weed,
Holding all it held before,
Cherished by the faithful sun,
On and on eternally
Shall your altered fluid run,
Bud and bloom and go to seed.
But your singing days are done;

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[1] Reprinted from *Second April*, published by Harper and Brothers. Copyright, 1921, 1924, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

But the music of your talk
Never shall the chemistry
Of the secret earth restore.
All your lovely words are spoken.
Once the ivory box is broken,
Beats the golden bird no more.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Archibald MacLeish was born in Glencoe, Illinois, May 7, 1892. His career at Yale, from which he graduated with the class of 1915, was probably the most brilliant and versatile of any during recent years. Football and water-polo were his athletic interests; socially he was honored by the oldest undergraduate organizations; he was chairman of the *Yale Literary Monthly;* he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. After college, MacLeish studied law at Harvard, became a Lieutenant in the artillery, and returned to graduate at the head of his class at the Harvard Law School. After a few years with a firm in Boston, he gave up the practice of law to devote his time to literature.

His first volume, *Tower of Ivory* (1917), gave few hints of the highly original talent that was revealed in *The Happy Marriage* (1924), *The Pot of Earth* (1925) and the curious *Nobodaddy* (1925). There are "influences" apparent in all of these. *The Happy Marriage* owes not a little to Conrad Aiken and E. A. Robinson; *The Pot of Earth* relies on T. S. Eliot's structure as well as his free use of dissonance, allusions and peculiar juxtapositions. But MacLeish has something to say which is quite his own, something about man's uncertain place in the Unknown. In *Streets in the Moon* (1926) the complete poet emerges. Here his subject-matter, conceived in amplitude, conveys an unusual "sense of infinity." But it is his idiom even more than his theme which makes MacLeish so important a representative of "modern" poetry. He can by the skilful use of repetition and suspense achieve a new effect in even so old a form as the sonnet (see "The End of the World"). "Ars Poetica" is more than an extension of poetic language; beneath its successful experiments in timing, interior rhyme and suspension, it says a number of pointed and profound things which have nothing to do with timeliness and changing tastes. The tone of these verses may be as new as this generation; the spirit which moves beneath them is as old as the unspoken word.

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown —

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

. . . . . .

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind —

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

. . . . . .

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea —

A poem should not mean
But be.

THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Mme. Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb —
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
There in the sudden blackness, the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing — nothing at all.

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

And here face down beneath the sun,
And here upon earth's noonward height,
To feel the always coming on,
The always rising of the night.

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow,

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening, strange,
The flooding dark about their knees,
The mountains over Persia change,

And now at Kermanshah the gate,
Dark, empty, and the withered grass,
And through the twilight now the late
Few travellers in the westward pass,

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone,
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on,

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone,
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown,

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls,
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls,

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa, the gilded sand,
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land,

Nor now the long light on the sea —
And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift, how secretly,
The shadow of the night comes on. . . .

ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth was born in 1893 in Buffalo, New York. After extended travels she returned to America, where she divides her time between California and an old house overlooking the harbor of Hingham, Massachusetts.

Miss Coatsworth made her début with *Fox Footprints* (1921), a group of images and studies in the Oriental mood.

Atlas and Beyond (1924) was a far more original work. Although it, too, finds its subjects overseas, there is nothing of the usual travel-book flavor in any poem, the section entitled "Italy" being particularly delightful because of its mixture of grace and irony. But it is her subsequent verses which disclose Miss Coatsworth as one of the most interesting of the younger lyricists. It is a deft hand that Miss Coatsworth turns from the fashioning of the bizarre to the suddenly poignant.

A LADY COMES TO AN INN

Three strange men came to the inn,
One was a black man pocked and thin,
One was brown with a silver knife,
And one brought with him a beautiful wife.

That lovely woman had hair as pale
As French champagne or finest ale,
That lovely woman was long and slim
As a young white birch or a maple limb.

Her face was like cream, her mouth was a rose,
What language she spoke nobody knows,
But sometimes she'd scream like a cockatoo
And swear wonderful oaths that nobody knew.

Her great silk skirts like a silver bell
Down to her little bronze slippers fell,
And her low-cut gown showed a dove on its nest
In blue tattooing across her breast.

Nobody learned the lady's name
Nor the marvellous land from which they came,
But no one in all the countryside
Has forgotten those men and that beautiful bride.

LOUIS GINSBERG

Louis Ginsberg was born October 1, 1896, at Newark, New Jersey. He attended Rutgers and Columbia University, receiving his M.A. in 1924. Since graduation, he has divided his time between writing and teaching English in the Central High School of Paterson, New Jersey.

His volume, *The Attic of the Past* (1920), shows various influences, none of which fail to hide the lyrist himself. Ginsberg's recent poems are not only swifter in their technique but clearer in the communication of "the glory of the commonplace." The poem here reprinted illustrates that gift.

FOG[1]

Here in this world of fog like amethyst,
Harshness has now been sponged away by mist.

The hardest, sternest lines relent and cease
Their cruelty, while angles cradle peace.

The blurry walks are sown with phantom feet,
While glamour drizzles slowly on the street.

As glory smoulders through the foggy veil,
A trolley crawls, a phosphorescent snail.

Tall buildings once so arrogant to see
Wilt to a white and gossamer frailty.

This mist can make the meanest side street be
Password and threshold for a mystery.

Blest is this mist that muffles sense and sound;
For, lest a cruel, heedless sun should pound

Merciless deserts of a blinding light,
Fog will bestow its gift of second sight!

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

Joseph Auslander was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1897. His education was decidedly mixed: he attended St. Catherine's School in Philadelphia, the Eastern District High School in Brooklyn, Harvard University and the Sorbonne. In 1922 he became a teacher at Harvard and in 1924 his first volume, *Sunrise Trumpets*, appeared with a foreword by Padraic Colum.

The outstanding feature of *Sunrise Trumpets* is its technique. Auslander is an adroit fashioner of polished phrases, of smoothly slipping terms of speech. The music which he employs is wholly traditional; he disdains none of the older properties no matter how often they have been repeated.

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[1] Compare this with the poem on the same subject by Carl Sandburg.

Auslander's subsequent verse has grown cooler and sharper. His touch is no less delicate, but he does not attempt to make the strings quiver with a continual *vibrato*. A firmness, almost a toughness, has entered his work and readers of his second volume, *Cyclops' Eye* (1926), will find a melodist who is no longer a poet of promise but one of possession. The long poem "Steel" and the two straightforward lyrics reprinted here are proofs of this.

THESE ARE THE OLD

These are the old — the brave, the broken
Old little people: these are the old.
And there is something they have not spoken,
And there is something they have not told:
Something about growing old together
Under the bleak or the friendly weather;
Something about the bare, chill room,
The depressing poverty odor, the gloom
That slinks up the tenement stairs; and their pride;
And the Specter that keeps them crucified. . . .
These are the people too sick, too cold,
Too hungry, too proud: these are the old.

REMEMBER ME, GULLS!

This is my hour between the flight and the flight
Of the trumpet-gulls manoeuvring in half-light;
Putting their beaks on edge
With colour; making a wedge
Between the livid twilight and the night.

Soon they will quiet their aquiline throats; and soon,
While the sun crumples like a little balloon
On fire, their wings will go slack,
The moon shift almond on black,
And clouds will hook their brooding claws on the moon.

Remember me, gulls; remember me, white birds flying
In narrow circles where the nets are drying!
By water and wind and the hot
Reek of the beach rot,
Remember me, gulls, cutting to the north and crying!

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Stephen Vincent Benét, the younger brother of William Rose Benét, was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in July, 1898. He was educated in various parts of the country, graduating from Yale in 1919.

At seventeen he published a small book containing six dramatic portraits, *Five Men and Pompey* (1915), a remarkable set of monologues which, in spite of distinct traces of Browning, was little short of astounding, coming from a schoolboy. In Benét's next volume, *Young Adventure* (1918), one hears something more than the speech of an infant prodigy; the precocious facility has developed into an individual vigor.

Heavens and Earth (1920) and *Tiger Joy* (1925), the most representative collections, have a greater imaginative sweep. His first novel, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, appeared in 1921. Like his brother, the younger Benét is at his best in the decoratively grotesque; his fancy exults in running the scales between the whimsically bizarre and the lightly diabolic.

PORTRAIT OF A BOY

After the whipping, he crawled into bed;
Accepting the harsh fact with no great weeping.
How funny uncle's hat had looked striped red!
He chuckled silently. The moon came, sweeping
A black frayed rag of tattered cloud before
In scorning; very pure and pale she seemed,
Flooding his bed with radiance. On the floor
Fat motes danced. He sobbed; closed his eyes and dreamed.

Warm sand flowed round him. Blurts of crimson light
Splashed the white grains like blood. Past the cave's mouth

Shone with a large fierce splendor, wildly bright,
The crooked constellations of the South;
Here the Cross swung; and there, affronting Mars,
The Centaur stormed aside a froth of stars.
Within, great casks like wattled aldermen
Sighed of enormous feasts, and cloth of gold
Glowed on the walls like hot desire. Again,
Beside webbed purples from some galleon's hold,
A black chest bore the skull and bones in white
Above a scrawled " Gunpowder! " By the flames,
Decked out in crimson, gemmed with syenite,
Hailing their fellows by outrageous names
The pirates sat and diced. Their eyes were moons.
" Doubloons! " they said. The words crashed gold. " Doubloons! "

LÉONIE ADAMS

Léonie Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. After a public school preparation she became a member of the class of 1922 at Barnard College, where she wrote her first published poems "in secret." While she was still an undergraduate, her remarkable "April Mortality" was printed in *The New Republic*, but, although this would have been sufficient stimulus for most young authors to rush into print, Miss Adams became more reticent than ever and rarely submitted any of her verse for publication.

It was only through the persuasion of two or three of her friends that her volume, *Those Not Elect* (1925), was made ready for the press. The author's own evasion of "realism" is apparent in all of her poetry. The poems themselves are of two sorts: the younger and simpler verses, full of a shy ecstasy, and the later, more metaphysical expressions of a rare and not so easily communicable wonder. But whatever her style, her sensitivity makes even the obscure passages a succession of splendid images. And there is no mistaking either her restraint or the beauty of her emotion. There is not a line in her work which is without suggestive distinction.

APRIL MORTALITY

Rebellion shook an ancient dust,
  And bones bleached dry of rottenness
Said: Heart, be bitter still, nor trust
  The earth, the sky, in their bright dress.

Heart, heart, dost thou not break to know
  This anguish thou wilt bear alone?
We sang of it an age ago,
  And traced it dimly upon stone.

With all the drifting race of men
  Thou also art begot to mourn
That she is crucified again,
  The lonely Beauty yet unborn.

And if thou dreamest to have won
  Some touch of her in permanence,
'Tis the old cheating of the sun,
  The intricate lovely play of sense.

Be bitter still, remember how
  Four petals, when a little breath
Of wind made stir the pear-tree bough,
  Blew delicately down to death.

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
  Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
  Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
  Like great gray sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms,
  The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
 And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
 The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
 Dusk ran before me to its strand
And cloudily leaned forth to touch
 The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

LULLABY

Hush, lullay,
Your treasures all
  Encrust with rust.
Your trinket pleasures
  Fall
To dust.
Beneath the sapphire arch
Upon the grassy floor
Is nothing more
  To hold,
And play is over old.
Your eyes
  In sleepy fever gleam,
Your lids droop
  To their dream.
You wander late alone,
The flesh frets on the bone,
Your love fails
  In your breast.
Here is the pillow.
  Rest.

EDWIN MORGAN

Edwin Morgan was born in 1899 in New York City, was graduated from New York University and studied literature at the Sorbonne in Paris. Although he has published little, his "Prayer" shows him in possession of an utterance that is no less rich for being restrained.

PRAYER

Now that I know
That what I am must be,
Lord, take Thy rod
And change me to a tree.

Now that I see
And now the best is known,
Lord, wave Thy hand
And turn me to a stone;

A dull dumb stone,
Or a stark old tree;
Thy rain, Thy wind,
Thy lightning over me!

HELENE MULLINS

Helene Mullins was born July 12, 1899, at New Rochelle, New York, and was educated in convent boarding-schools. She began writing poems at the age of eleven and in 1922 began publishing in the magazines. She soon attracted attention in F. P. A.'s column, "The Conning Tower," where her poems appeared for several years on the average of more than one a week. In collaboration with her sister, Marie Gallagher, she published a novel, *Paulus Fy* (1924).

Her first book of poems, *Comedy and Distress*, which appeared in an exquisite limited edition in 1928, reveals an unusual craftsmanship. But it is something more than a display of technique which one finds here. Beneath the facile joining of words, Miss Mullins justifies her title. The poem reprinted here is an excellent instance of how this poet can vary the tight form of the quatrain and use an irregular rhythm most effectively.

ANXIETY IN SOLITUDE

This evening I await an elegant young gentleman
Who has known me a number of years, and sometimes reads
my verse.

He has avowed to me not once, but again and again,
That he thinks me an honest poet, and is sure there are many
worse.

I have this day finished a lyric he has not seen before.
I am, with it, like a queen with a gem that has cost a fabulous
sum;
Yet sitting here and awaiting his knock upon the door,
I am ill at ease, I twist my hands, I pray he forget to come.

I begin to fear the evening will be rather droll;
Somewhat between regret and a furtive dismay,
He will carefully keep his emotions under control,
While squeezing me into a niche where he hopes I will stay.

He will long to regard me with tenderness; yet think!
What can he feel for me, excepting compassion,
Whose poetry is charming, but whose fingers are stained
with ink,
And whose gown is not very bright, and not of the latest
fashion?

DOROTHY E. REID

Dorothy E. Reid was born in 1900 in Bucyrus, Ohio. At Ohio State University, from which she was graduated in 1925, she won the annual Vandewater Prize and was editor-in-chief of *The Candle*, a magazine of "revolt against opinionless student life." After some school teaching and newspaper work, she became engaged in advertising in Columbus, Ohio.

Coach Into Pumpkin (1925) is definitely the work of a beginner, but a beginner with charm and sensitivity. The unusual turn of phrase is evident even in her less successful poems; the poet possesses a "point of view" which is as "different" as her personal blend of observation and fantasy. This combination is more apparent in her later work which continually fluctuates between lightness and poignance.

MEN

I like men.
  They stride about,
They reach in their pockets
  And pull things out;

They look important,
  They rock on their toes,
They lose all the buttons
  Off their clothes;

They throw away pipes,
  They find them again.
Men are queer creatures;
  I like men.

MRS. WINKELSTEINER

Mrs. Winkelsteiner
  Made songs in her head;
You went to borrow eggs,
  You got songs instead,

Or a song about eggs
  And the eggs in a sack;
It wasn't very long
  Till you hurried right back.

Mrs. Winkelsteiner
  Sat around the room;
Her three brown daughters
  Were handy with the broom,

And handy with the iron,
  And handy with the bread;
But Mrs. Winkelsteiner
  Made songs in her head.

“ Little birdie in the tree,
Chirp a song to me.”

“ Red cow sitting in the sun,
Waiting for farmer to come.”

“ Eggs so smooth and round,
Hens lay them on the ground.”

Mrs. Winkelsteiner’s
  Been a long time dead,
And all the songs she knew
  Are cold in her head.

You go after eggs
  And the eggs are in a sack,
It isn’t very often
  That you want to go back

Where the birds still chirp,
  And the hens still call,
And the three brown daughters
  Never sing at all.

LANGSTON HUGHES

Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. He was brought up in several cities in the Middle West, was graduated from Central High School in Cleveland and at eighteen became a teacher of English in Mexico, where he lived for a year and a half. He spent a year at Columbia University and some time as a worker on the high seas. Then we find Hughes going to Paris in midwinter with only seven dollars in his pocket. He stayed in France ten months, worked his way through Italy and Spain, and returned to New York with twenty-five cents. Working as a busboy in Washington, he was discovered by Vachel Lindsay, who read several of his poems to a fashionable audience in the very hotel in which Hughes carried trays of dishes. This incident attracted the attention of the press of the country, and people who never would have glanced at the poetry for its own sake became interested in the career of so extraordinary a singer.

The Weary Blues, Hughes' first volume, appeared in January, 1926. One of the poems had already won first prize in a contest conducted by *Opportunity*, a magazine which did great service in fostering creative work by negroes. Hughes' poetry appearing at the same time as Countee Cullen's justified those who claimed we were witnessing a revival of negro art. Among the whites, Eugene O'Neill, Waldo Frank, Sherwood Anderson and Carl Van Vechten had already shown the significance of the negro in literature. The negroes themselves began to prove the quality of their inheritance. Johnson's *The Book of American Negro Poetry* appeared, two books of American negro spirituals disclosed the genuine melodic fertility of the black singers, and various collections of blues revealed how greatly all American composers were indebted to the rude rhythms and sobbing saxophones of the dark musicians. Hughes was the first to express the spirit of these blues in words. In his note to his second volume, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), he writes, "The *Blues*, unlike the *Spirituals*, have a strict poetic pattern: one long line repeated and a third line to rhyme with the first two. Sometimes the second line in repetition is slightly changed and sometimes, but very seldom, it is omitted. The mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh."

Although at least half of Hughes' work centers about the blues much of his poetry is grim in an essentially modern manner. His portraits of negro workmen (as evidenced in the remarkable "Brass Spittoons") are more memorable than those produced by any of his compatriots. Beneath the physical struggle one senses the still more suffering spirit.

HOMESICK BLUES

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station;
Ma heart was in ma mouth.

Went down to de station;
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin' for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin'
I opens ma mouth an' laughs.

BRASS SPITTOONS

Clean the spittoons, boy.
        Detroit,
        Chicago,
        Atlantic City,
        Palm Beach.
Clean the spittoons.
The steam in hotel kitchens,
And the smoke in hotel lobbies,
And the slime in hotel spittoons:
Part of my life.
        Hey, boy!
        A nickel,
        A dime,
        A dollar,
Two dollars a day.
        Hey, boy!
        A nickel,
        A dime,
        A dollar,
        Two dollars
Buys shoes for the baby.
House rent to pay.
Church on Sunday.
        My God!

Babies and church
and women and Sunday
all mixed up with dimes and
dollars and clean spittoons
and house rent to pay.
      Hey, boy!

A bright bowl of brass is beautiful to the Lord.
Bright polished brass like the cymbals
Of King David's dancers,
Like the wine cups of Solomon.
      Hey, boy!
A clean spittoon on the altar of the Lord.
A clean bright spittoon all newly polished.—
At least I can offer that.
      Com' mere, boy!

COUNTEE CULLEN

Countee Cullen was born in New York City in 1903, the son of the Reverend Frederick A. Cullen. He was educated in the New York public and high schools and New York University, being graduated with the class of 1925.

When *The Book of American Negro Poetry* was published in 1922, Cullen was still in his 'teens and his few verses were no more unusual than most youthful flights. Had the anthology been collected three years later, a selection from Cullen's work would have been one of its outstanding features. Beginning in 1924, poems by this hitherto unknown negro began appearing in various magazines; within a year his name had reached the literary circles. A firmness of execution, a boldness of style, and a decided gift of epigram were apparent in his work. Cullen's first volume, *Color*, appeared late in 1925 and disclosed a brilliance for which even his admirers were not prepared, a brilliance which makes one willing to overlook the poet's influences. Although this volume and the subsequent *Copper Sun* (1927) reveal little that is definitely negro in idiom or rhythm (differing greatly from Langston Hughes), Cullen's background has, to some extent, conditioned his subject-matter.

SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet he called my name.
He never gave a sign to see,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, " I will not bear
His cross upon my back —
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,
And He was very meek;
And in His eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.

FROM THE DARK TOWER

We shall not always plant while others reap
The golden increment of bursting fruit,
Nor always countenance, abject and mute,
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;
Not everlastingly while others sleep
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,
Not always bend to some more subtle brute.
We were not made eternally to weep.

The night, whose sable breast relieves the stark,
White stars, is no less lovely being dark;
And there are buds that cannot bloom at all
In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall.
So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,
And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

Roberta Teale Swartz was born in Brooklyn, New York, June 9, 1903. When Miss Swartz went to college, her gift was discovered while she was a sophomore. As an undergraduate, she won three of the important prizes offered by various universities, Robert Frost and the present editor being two of the judges who selected her anonymous work from a score of others. Miss Swartz was graduated from Mount Holyoke with the class of 1925.

Her volume *Lilliput* (1926) is distinctly lyrical. The occasional free verse has little charm beyond a certain quirk of intellect. This turn of thought is at its best in the fanciful animal poems and the more regular but informal verses which are seldom without a half-defiant, half-questioning pucker.

COLLAR AND CUFFS

Collar and cuffs of fur —
I never had fur before —
This, that once another
Confidently wore

When he crept beneath the ground
Warm and wise,
And in the comfort of his coat
Closed his eyes;

Slept with all this softness round him,
Woke again to go
Into the cold, unshivering,
Sweetly clad, through snow.

O how shall I forget?
How can I bear to trim
My big coat with the little coat
That belonged to him?

Virginia Moore was born July 11, 1903, in Harvard, Nebraska, of Southern parentage. Her early life was spent entirely in the South; she was educated at Hollins College in Virginia, from which she was graduated with the degree of A.B. at the age of nineteen. She received her M.A. at Columbia University a year later and supported herself for a while in New York by reviewing.

Her first volume, *Not Poppy* (1926), is the expression of a spirit which is both proud and passionate; it vibrates with youth and youth's invincible challenge. The idiom is individualized, although one can trace the influence of Browning in attitude and Emily Dickinson in phraseology. Miss Moore's subsequent poetry is more definitely her own; it owes less to the "mischievous brain" and more to the candidly declared emotions. "Origin," with its mixture of gravity and whimsicality, establishes this; in its very understatement it amounts to something that may well be a credo.

ORIGIN

Whatever we are is surely implied
In the quiet curves of the countryside.

We walk alone in the yellowing air
As lovers have walked since the First Affair.

We follow the roots as far as we can
And come at last to the meaning of man.

Down, down, to the seed of the earth
Where the brutes, and the birds, and ourselves had birth.

Under the stone and the milkweed stalk,
Under the channels where rivers walk,

Here we were born, here we were bred,
And the long dream started inside of our head.

A yellowing leaf is the sign thereof
And a darkening hill given over to love.

Whatever we are was always implied
In the quiet curves of the countryside.

BRIGHTON BEACH

This is the sea and I am but I,
Giving my body over to sky,
Running, an atom surcharged with delight,
Close to the atom I love. Let the night
Blot us to nothing, today we will run
Crazily into the camp of the sun!
We will emerge all dribbled with gold,
Knowing that we will never be old,
Never be haggard and never be two —
Isn't the sea transcendantly blue?
This is the color archangels invent,
Blue for a madness, blue for content.
This is God's private and generous pool
Where he wades, naked, on nights that are cool.
This is the wind and the pigment of sky
Mixed and commanded never to dry,
Never to cease this throwing away —
Breaker and beach in primordial play.
Run with me, prodigal, over the sands
Into the sea, for an atom expands
Into the infinite, wind being right
And all of the breakers gathered to smite.
Now I believe in the purpose of fish
Swimming like us in the sea's blue dish,
Blood that is cold and tails that are free,
Under the same compulsion as we;
Polyps that never intend to be tame,
Seaweed too busy to get it a name,
Coral much pinker than well-polished bone
After a sinking, the green undertone
Of liberal waters that quicken their pace,
Stagger like giants, and fall on their face.
Even the gulls are a little more bold,
Drilling the sun for an ooze of gold,
Screaming for company there in the blue,
Jealous, perhaps, of my having you.

George Dillon was born November 12, 1906, in Jacksonville, Florida, and spent most of his childhood in Kentucky, his mother's region. He went to school in the Middle West and was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1927.

While still an undergraduate, his verses began to attract attention far beyond the borders of Illinois, and he was made president of the Poetry Club of his University and in 1925 was given the John Billings Fiske Prize as well as the Young Poet's Prize awarded by *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. In the same year he joined the *Poetry* staff as Associate Editor. His *Boy in the Wind* (1927) is distinguished by much more than precocity; always musical, there is a sharp-flavored tang which proceeds from an unusually keen intellect. With this first volume, Dillon proves himself one of America's undoubted lyricists.

IN TWO MONTHS NOW

In two months now or maybe one
The sun will be a different sun
And earth that stretches white as straw
With stony ice will crack and thaw
And run in whistling streams and curve
In still blue-shadowed pools. The nerve
Of each pink root will quiver bare
And orchards in the April air
Will show black branches breaking white.
Red roses in the green twilight
Will glimmer ghostly blue and swell
Upon their vines with such a smell
As only floats when the breeze is loud
At dusk from roses in a crowd.
I know that there will be these things
Remembering them from other springs.
All these and more shall soon be seen,
As beautiful as they have been;
But not so beautiful as they
Seem now to be, a month away.

Tom Prideaux was born May 9, 1908, in Hillsdale, Michigan, and came East as a child. The greater part of his education was undergone at The Lincoln School (New York City) where his contributions to the school magazine were widely reprinted. His work was the outstanding feature of *Creative Youth* (1925), a collection of unusual poems written by students of The Lincoln School. Prideaux entered Yale in 1926.

THE CONTRACT

I must stop to heed the dusk,
 For I have signed;
Industry and peace are for
 The blessed blind;
I could coldly wave it off
 If it were just
Moral obligation or
 A sacred trust . . .
I must heed the terms of earth,
 For I have signed,
And the clause concerning dusk
 Is underlined.

HILDA CONKLING

Hilda Conkling, gifted as an infant, was born at Catskill-on-Hudson, New York, October 8, 1910. The daughter of Grace Hazard Conkling (see page 157), she came to Northampton, Massachusetts, with her mother when she was three years old and has lived there ever since.

Hilda began to write poems — or rather, to talk them — at the age of four. Since that time, she has created one hundred and fifty little verses, many of them astonishing in exactness of phrase and beauty of vision.

Poems by a Little Girl (1920), published when Hilda was a little more than nine years old, is a detailed proof of this unaffected originality; "Water," "Hay-Cock," and a dozen others are startling in their precision and a power of painting the familiar in unsuspected colors. She hears a chickadee talking

The way smooth bright pebbles
Drop into water.

The rooster's comb is "gay as a parade"; he has "pearl trinkets on his feet" and

The short feathers smooth along his back
Are the dark color of wet rocks,
Or the rippled green of ships
When I look at their sides through water.

Shoes of the Wind (1922) proves that her first volume was no mere wonder-child's freak. Here again her vision is precise even when her imagination is most playful. She watches pigeons with "feet the color of new June strawberries," she observes a pink peony standing in a tall glass as "Queen Elizabeth in a ruff," lilies-of-the-valley are "bell-shaped moments clustered, doves of time." This clarity of epithet makes Hilda kin to the Imagist; Amy Lowell might have described a flight of pigeons in just such words as Hilda's: "A cool curving and sliding down the light."

WATER

The world turns softly
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
The water is held in its arms
And the sky is held in the water.

What is water,
That pours silver,
And can hold the sky?

HAY-COCK

This is another kind of sweetness
Shaped like a bee-hive:
This is the hive the bees have left,
It is from this clover-heap
They took away the honey
For the other hive!

I KEEP WONDERING

I saw a mountain,
And he was like Wotan looking at himself in the water.
I saw a cockatoo,
And he was like sunset clouds.
Even leaves and little stones
Are different to my eyes sometimes.
I keep wondering through and through my heart
Where all the beautiful things in the world
Come from.
And while I wonder
They go on being beautiful.

NATHALIA CRANE

Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane, the most remarkable phenomenon since the days of Marjorie Fleming, was born in New York City, August 11, 1913. Through her father she is descended from John and Priscilla Alden, Stephen Crane being a not distant kinsman; on her mother's side she inherits the varied gifts of a famous family of Spanish Jews which counts among its members poets, musicians and ministers of state.

Nathalia began to write when she was little more than eight years old. At the age of nine she sent some of her verses to *The New York Sun* and they were accepted wholly on their merit by Edmund Leamy, the poetry editor, Leamy having no idea that the lines were written by a child.

Nathalia's first volume, *The Janitor's Boy*, appeared when its author was ten and a half, in 1924, becoming one of the most discussed publications of the year. Some of the critics explained the work by insisting that the child was some sort of instrument unaware of what was played upon it; others scorned the chance that any child should have written verses so smooth in execution and so remarkable in spiritual overtones. Whatever the source may be, whether the inspiration derives from the unconscious or some inheritance, the poetry is a firm and definite accomplishment.

The verse itself is sharply divided into two kinds: the light and genuinely childish jingle — the sort of thinking native to children but which most of them are unable to compress into rhyme — and the incredibly grave and cryptic poetry. Even in the first division there is a quality unusual to child verse; in such merry stanzas as "The Flathouse Roof," there is a sly sophistication which lifts these above many of Eugene Field's rhymes on similar themes. The turn of epigram is never lacking; even in her pattering syllables she speaks of "the tenseness of humiliating pain"; an emotion suspiciously like humor leads her to begin another poem:

> I linger on the flathouse roof, the moonlight is divine,
> But my heart is all a-flutter like the washing on the line.

The other division of Nathalia's work, which is no longer verse but indubitable poetry, reveals the fact that Nathalia has read much not only in books of legends but in the dictionary. This juvenile mystic is as fond of archaic syllables as Francis Thompson (she collects unusual words just as other children collect postage stamps) and she enjoys using a string of glistening alliterations to express some tremendous psychic fact.

Lava Lane (1925) and *The Singing Crow* (1926) are more sedate; these two volumes are almost wholly serious and the growth in emotion is obvious. The brilliant images, the symbolic depth, the uncanny perceptions make the individual lines and the general concepts memorable. One realizes that the appeal of this poetry does not depend on its having been written by a child but by a poet.

In November, 1927, Nathalia won the first prize ($500) in the contest for the best poem celebrating Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic. A novel with a curious and original theme, *The Sunken Garden*, was published in 1925.

THE JANITOR'S BOY

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
   And the janitor's boy loves me;
He's going to hunt for a desert isle
   In our geography.

A desert isle with spicy trees
   Somewhere near Sheepshead Bay;
A right nice place, just fit for two,
   Where we can live alway.

Oh, I'm in love with the janitor's boy,
   He's busy as he can be;
And down in the cellar he's making a raft
   Out of an old settee.

He'll carry me off, I know that he will,
For his hair is exceedingly red,
And the only thing that occurs to me
Is to dutifully shiver in bed.

The day that we sail, I shall leave this brief note,
For my parents I hate to annoy:
"I have flown away to an isle in the bay
With the janitor's red-haired boy."

THE PROPOSALS

Said the tiger to the lily,
Said the viper to the rose:
Let us marry so our children
May attain the double pose.

With a feline half a flower —
With the attar in the asp,
We could institute a slaughter
That would make a planet gasp.

But the lily told the tiger
'Twas an empty enterprise
To bring up little half-breeds
With lanterns in their eyes.

And the rosebud gave her answer
The while she merely smiled:
The babe two-fourths a viper
Would drive a mother wild.

The world is growing gentle,
But few know what she owes
To the understanding lily
And the judgment of the rose.

GREATNESS

I sing a song of greatness —
  The grandeur in a grain;
Of seas that rim the minim,
  Of dust that breeds a plain.

Of hope in beetles' bosoms,
  Of love of butterflies;
The valor of the thistle
  That seeks to down the skies.

I sing a song of greatness —
  The mount that holds a horde;
The lord of all the honey,
  The dot that draws the sword.

The ardor that deposits
  In miniature a churl,
Slips on a coat of nacre
  And then parades the pearl.

I sing a song of greatness,
  Of loomsters spinning strings,
The ember in the glowworm:
  The candle borne by wings.

The banquets served on beeswax,
  The locust's home-brewed ale,
And greatness quaffing gallons
  In mansions of the snail.

DESTINY

The wind doth wander up and down,
Forever seeking for a crown;
The rose, in stillness on a stem,
Inherits love's own diadem.

MODERN BRITISH POETRY

PREFACE

THE END OF VICTORIANISM

The age commonly called Victorian came to an end in England about 1885. It was an age distinguished by many true idealists and many false ideals. It was, in spite of its notable artists, on an entirely different level from the epoch which had preceded it. Its poetry was, in the main, not universal but parochial; its romanticism was gilt and tinsel; its realism was as cheap as its showy glass pendants, red plush, parlor chromos and antimacassars. The period was full of a pessimistic resignation (the note popularized by Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyám) and a kind of negation which, refusing to see any glamour in the actual world. turned to the Middle Ages, to King Arthur, to the legend of Troy — to the suave surroundings of a dream-world instead of the hard contours of actual experience.

The poets of a generation before this time were fired with such ideas as freedom, a deep and burning awe of nature. an insatiable hunger for truth in all its forms and manifestations. The characteristic but by no means the best poets of the Victorian Era, says Max Plowman, " wrote under the dominance of churchliness, of ' sweetness and light,' and a thousand lesser theories that have not Truth but comfort for their end."

The revolt against this and the tawdriness of the period had already begun; the best of Victorianism can be found not in men who were typically Victorian, but in pioneers like Browning and writers like Swinburne, Rossetti, William Morris, who were completely out of sympathy with their time.

It was Oscar Wilde who led the men of the now famous 'nineties toward an æsthetic freedom, to champion a beauty whose existence was its " own excuse for being." Wilde's was, in the most outspoken manner, the first use of æstheticism as a slogan; the battle-cry of the group was actually the now outworn but then revolutionary "Art for Art's sake"! And, so sick were people of the shoddy ornaments and drab ugliness of the immediate past, that the slogan won. At least, temporarily.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ÆSTHETIC PHILOSOPHY

The Yellow Book, the organ of a group of young writers and artists, appeared (1894–97), representing a reasoned and intellectual reaction, mainly suggested and influenced by the French. The group of contributors was a peculiarly mixed one with only one thing in common. And that was a conscious effort to repudiate the sugary airs and prim romantics of the Victorian Era.

Almost the first act of the "new" men was to rouse and outrage their immediate predecessors. This end-of-the-century desire to shock, which was so strong and natural an impulse, still has a place of its own — especially as an antidote, a harsh corrective. Mid-Victorian propriety and self-satisfaction crumbled under the swift and energetic audacities of the sensational young authors and artists. The old walls fell; the public, once so apathetic to *belles lettres*, was more than attentive to every phase of literary experimentation. The last decade of the nineteenth century was so tolerant of novelty in art and ideas, that it would seem, says Holbrook Jackson in his penetrative summary, *The Eighteen-Nineties*, "as though the declining century wished to make amends for several decades of artistic monotony. It may indeed be something more than a coincidence that placed this decade at the close of a century, and *fin de siècle* may have been at once a swan song and a death-bed repentance."

Later on, the movement (if such it may be called), surfeited with its own excesses, fell into the mere poses of revolt; it degenerated into a defense not of Art but Artificiality. Its failure, even as a " movement," was its failure to move.

It scarcely needed W. S. Gilbert (in *Patience*) or Robert Hichens (in *The Green Carnation*) to satirize its distorted and disillusioned attitudinizing. It strained itself to death: it became its own burlesque of the bizarre, an extravaganza of extravagance.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Henley repudiated this languid æstheticism; he scorned a negative art which was out of touch with the world. His was a large and sweeping affirmation. He felt that mere existence was glorious; life was coarse, difficult, often dangerous and dirty, but splendid at the heart. Art, he knew, could not be separated from the dreams and hungers of man; it could not flourish only on its own essences or technical accomplishments. To live, poetry would have to share the fears. angers, hopes and struggles of the prosaic world. And so Henley came like a swift salt breeze blowing through a perfumed and heavily-screened studio. He sang loudly (often too loudly) of the joy of living and the courage of the " unconquerable soul." He was a powerful influence not only as a poet but as a critic and editor. A pioneer and something of a prophet, he was one of the first to champion the paintings of Whistler and to proclaim the genius of the sculptor Rodin.

If at times Henley's verse is imperialistic, over-muscular and strident, his noisy moments are redeemed not only by his delicate lyrics but by his passionate enthusiasm for nobility in whatever cause it was joined.

THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND J. M. SYNGE

In 1889, William Butler Yeats published his *Wanderings of Oisin;* in the same year Douglas Hyde, the scholar and folk-lorist, brought out his *Book of Gaelic Stories.*

The revival of Gaelic and the renascence of Irish literature may be said to date from the publication of those two books.

The fundamental idea of both men and their followers was the same. It was to create a literature which would express the national consciousness of Ireland through a purely national art. This community of fellowship and aims is to be found in the varied but allied work of William Butler Yeats, " A. E." (George W. Russell), Moira O'Neill, Lionel Johnson, Katharine Tynan, Padraic Colum and others. They began to reflect the strange background of dreams, politics, suffering and heroism that is immortally Irish. The first fervor gone, a short period of dullness set in. After reanimating the old myths, surcharging legendary heroes with a new significance, it seemed for a while that the movement would lose itself in a literary mysticism. But an increasing concern with the peasant, the migratory laborer, the tramp, followed; an interest that was something of a reaction against the influence of Yeats and his mystic other-worldliness. And, in 1904, the Celtic Revival reached its height with John Millington Synge, who was not only the greatest dramatist of the Irish Theatre, but (to quote such contrary critics as George Moore and Harold Williams) " one of the greatest dramatists who have written in English." Synge's poetry, brusque and all too small in quantity, was a minor occupation with him and yet the quality and power of it is unmistakable. Its content is never great but the raw vigor in it was to serve as a bold banner — a sort of brilliant Jolly Roger — for the younger men of the following period. It is not only this dramatist's brief verses and his intensely musical prose but his sharp prefaces that have exercised so strong an influence.

Synge's poetic power is unquestionably greatest in his superb plays. In *The Well of the Saints*, *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Riders to the Sea* there are more poignance, beauty of form and richness of language than in any piece of dramatic writing since Elizabethan times.

But although Synge's poetry was not his major concern, numbering only twenty-four original pieces and eighteen translations, it had a surprising effect upon his followers. It marked a point of departure, a reaction against both the too-polished and over-rhetorical verse of his immediate predecessors and the dehumanized mysticism of many of his associates. In that memorable preface to his *Poems* he wrote what was a manifesto and at the same time a classic *credo* for all that we may call the "new" poetry. "I have often thought," it begins, "that at the side of poetic diction, which everyone condemns, modern verse contains a great deal of poetic material, using 'poetic' in the same special sense. The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest; but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation in the way that men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops. . . . Even if we grant that exalted poetry can be kept successfully by itself, the strong things of life are needed in poetry also, to show that what is exalted or tender is not made by feeble blood."

RUDYARD KIPLING

New tendencies are contagious. But they also disclose themselves simultaneously in places and people where there has been no point of contact. While Synge was publishing his proofs of the keen poetry in everyday life, Kipling was illuminating, in a totally different manner, the wealth of poetic material in things hitherto regarded as too commonplace for poetry. Before literary England had quite recovered from its surfeit of Victorian priggishness and pre-Raphaelite delicacy, Kipling came along with high spirits and a great tide of life, sweeping all before him. An obscure Anglo-Indian journalist, the publication of his *Barrack-room Ballads* in 1892 brought him sudden notice. By 1895 he was internationally famous. Brushing over the pallid attempts to revive a pallid past, he rode triumphantly on a wave of buoyant and sometimes brutal joy in the present. Kipling gloried in the material world; he did more — he glorified it. He pierced the coarse exteriors of seemingly prosaic things — things like machinery, bridge-building, cockney soldiers, slang, steam, the dirty by-products of science (witness "M'Andrews' Hymn" and "The Bell

Buoy") — and uncovered their hidden glamour. "Romance is gone," sighed most of his contemporaries,

> "... and all unseen
> Romance brought up the nine-fifteen."

That sentence (from his poem "The King") contains the key to the manner in which the author of *The Five Nations* helped to rejuvenate English verse.

Kipling, with his perception of ordinary people in terms of ordinary life, was one of the strongest links between the Wordsworth-Browning era and the latest apostles of vigor, beginning with Masefield. He has had a score of imitators, ranging from the facile Cicely Fox Smith to the glibly uninspired Robert W. Service, but none of them has captured anything of his quality except his characteristic beat and rhythms. There are occasional and serious defects in Kipling's work. Frequently he falls into a journalistic ease that tends to turn into jingle; he is fond of a militaristic drum-banging that is as blatant as the insularity he condemns. But a burning if sometimes too fatuous faith shines through his achievements. His best work reveals an intensity that crystallizes into beauty what was originally tawdry; it lifts the vulgar and incidental to the place of the universal.

JOHN MASEFIELD

All art is a twofold revivifying — a recreation of subject and a reanimating of form. And poetry becomes perennially "new" by returning to the old — with a different consciousness, a greater awareness. In 1911, when art was again searching for novelty, John Masefield created something startling and new by going back to 1385 and *The Canterbury Pilgrims!* Employing both the Chaucerian model and a form similar to the practically forgotten Byronic stanza, Masefield wrote, in rapid succession, *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), *The Daffodil Fields* (1913) — four astonishing rhymed narratives and four of the most remarkable poems of our generation. Expressive of every rugged phase of life, these poems, uniting old and new manners, responded to Synge's proclamation that "the strong things of life are needed in poetry also . . . and it may almost be said that before verse can be human again it must be brutal."

Masefield brought back to poetry that mixture of beauty and brutality which is its very human and enduring quality. He brought back that rich and almost vulgar animation which is the lifeblood of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, of Burns, of Villon, of Heine — and of all those who were not only great artists but great humanists. As a purely descriptive poet, he can take his place with the masters of sea and landscape. As an imaginative realist, he showed those who were stumbling from one wild eccentricity to another to thrill them, that they themselves were wilder, stranger, far more thrilling than anything in the world — or out of it. Few things in contemporary poetry are as powerful as the regeneration of Saul Kane (in *The Everlasting Mercy*) or the story of *Dauber*, the tale of a tragic sea-voyage and a dreaming youth who wanted to be a painter. The vigorous description of rounding Cape Horn in the latter poem is superbly done, a masterpiece in itself. Masefield's later volumes are quieter in tone, more measured in technique; there is an almost religious ring to many of his Shakespearean sonnets. But the swinging line is there, a passionate strength that leaps through all his work from *Salt Water Ballads* (1902) to *Reynard the Fox* (1919).

THE WAR AND "THE GEORGIANS"

There is no sharp statistical line of demarcation between Masefield and the younger men. Although several of them owe much to him, most of the younger poets speak in accents of their own. W. W. Gibson had already reinforced the "return to actuality" by turning from his first preoccupation with shining knights, faultless queens, ladies in distress and all the paraphernalia of hackneyed mediæval romances, to write about ferrymen, berry-pickers, stone-cutters, farmers, printers, circus-men, carpenters — dramatizing (though sometimes theatricalizing) the primitive emotions of uncultured and ordinary people in *Livelihood, Daily Bread* and *Fires*. This intensity had been asking new questions. It found its answers in the war; repressed emotionalism discovered a new outlet.

The first volume of the biennial *Georgian Poetry* had just appeared when the war caught up the youth of England in a great gust of national fervor. Not only the young men but their seniors joined what seemed then to be " the Great Adventure," only to find that it was, as one of them has since called it, " the Late Great Nightmare." After the early flush of romanticism had passed, the voices of bitter disillusion were heard. Not at first, for the censorship was omnipresent. But Siegfried Sassoon's fierce satires and burning denunciations could not be stilled, the mocking lines of Robert Graves began to be quoted, and Wilfred Owen's posthumous poems painted a picture the very opposite of the journalistic jingo verses which attempted to depict civilization's greatest blow in bright and cheerful colors.

Recently, in an article on a similar theme, Graves wrote: " The poetry written by actual soldiers is perhaps too familiar for discussion, but we may remind ourselves of one or two outstanding facts usually overlooked: that Rupert Brooke saw many warlike scenes but no actual fighting, that Mr. Robert Nichols, with the best of intentions, only saw three weeks' service in France and this on a quiet sector with the artillery: that of the other poets with reputations as War-poets not more than four or five (including Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen who was killed just before the Armistice, Isaac Rosenberg, Edmund Blunden and Herbert Read) bore the heat and burden of the War; and that these unanimously vilified rather than celebrated the War: and that of these only Siegfried Sassoon published his verse while the War was still on."

AFTERMATH

English literature suffered, as a result of the war, not only from individual losses but from general shock. This shock affected the writers of every school and diverted where it did not arrest the current of contemporary verse. It threw Masefield back to the classic drama of half a century ago; it silenced such of its surviving War poets as refused to continue to write about " the collective madness " and yet could think of little else. And it created the sharp division between the new group of English pastoral poets and the still younger intellectuals. The reactions of the two contradictory movements are easy to understand. Wishing to escape the intricate urban civilization which had scarred Europe with ruins, many of the poets turned hopefully to the traditional curlew-calling, plover-haunted English countryside. The machine is a dead thing spreading death. they cried; only the soil creates. " We have had enough of destructive ingenuities; let us go back to the primal simplicities." Following, more or less unconsciously, the example of that genuinely naïf poet, W. H. Davies, a small cohort of writers began to sing exclusively about the charms of childhood, sunsets and rural delights. But where Davies's innocence is natural and deep, the simplicity of most of the pastoral Georgians is predetermined and superficial. Much of the resulting poetry is inspired by the wish to avoid past memories rather than by a spontaneous affection for the present scene; much of it, indeed, seems a sort of spiritual convalescence. At the same time, a submerged intensity was manifest.

But intensity was not confined to the martial or the antimilitarist poets. It declared itself even in the unrealistic poems of the romantic Rupert Brooke (who owes less to his immediate predecessors than he does to the passionately intellectual John Donne), in the dark introspections of D. H. Lawrence and the brooding nobility of Charlotte Mew. And. though the younger poets (John Freeman, W. J. Turner and others) are echoing traditional English landscape poetry with great persistence and little variety, magic has not disappeared from the world of the contemporary Englishman.

Magic lives in the moon-soaked wonder and nursery-rhyme whimsicality of Walter de la Mare, in the limpid and unperturbed loveliness of Ralph Hodgson, in the fresh and delicate lyrics of W. H. Davies, in the soil-flavored fantasies of James Stephens, in the delicate dissonances of Humbert Wolfe. Any one of these singers would be an exquisite ornament to his decade.

All of the poets mentioned in this section (with the exception of Charlotte Mew, Wolfe, and Wilfred Owen, whose verse was posthumously published) formed a loose group called "The Georgians," and an anthology of their best work appeared every two years from 1911 to 1921. Masefield, Lascelles Abercrombie and John Drinkwater are also listed among the Georgian poets. When their first collection appeared in March, 1911, Henry Newbolt, critic as well as poet, wrote: "These younger poets have no temptation to be false. They are not for making something 'pretty,' something up to the standard of professional patterns. . . . They write as grown men walk, each with his own unconscious stride and gesture. . . . In short, they express themselves and seem to steer without an effort between the dangers of innovation and reminiscence."

The secret of this success is not an exclusive discovery of the modern poets. It is their inheritance, derived from those predecessors who, "from Wordsworth and Coleridge onward, have worked for the assimilation of verse to the manner and accent of natural speech." In its adaptability no less than in its vigor, modern English poetry is true to its period — and to its past.

THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy, born at Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, in 1840, has been famous for many years on both sides of the Atlantic as the author of a series of intense and somber novels. His reputation as a poet has grown more slowly: today several of his admirers claim that his verse surpasses even the best of his prose.

Hardy's schooling was anything but academic. When sixteen, he was apprenticed to an ecclesiastical architect. Later, he left his native village and worked in London, where he won the prize offered by the Royal Institute of British Architects. This was in 1863. A few years after, he abandoned architecture and, in 1871, his first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, was published. It was a failure, little attention being paid to the author until the publication of *Under the Greenwood Tree*. From that time on his success as a writer was assured; with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, both of which were bitterly criticized, his reputation became international.

It was not until he was almost sixty, in 1898 to be precise, that Hardy abandoned prose and challenged attention as a poet. *The Dynasts*, a drama of the Napoleonic Wars, is in three parts, nineteen acts and one hundred and thirty scenes, a massive and most amazing contribution to contemporary art.

Hardy's *Collected Poems* were published by The Macmillan Company in 1919; two subsequent volumes, *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922) and *Human Shows, Far Fantasies, Songs and Trifles* (1925) — the latter published when Hardy was eighty-five — show how, instead of declining, his power gathered fresh strength in his later years.

Hardy's death in his eighty-eighth year, depriving contemporary England of its most eminent author, closed a life patriarchal in span, extraordinary in creative power. Hardy outlived the harsh attacks on his novels to see each publication of his later poems greeted as a national event. He died January 11, 1928, and, as his will expressly stated he wished to be buried in the soil he loved so well, his heart was interred in Stinsford churchyard in his own village. His body was then cremated and, yielding to, the nation's desire, the ashes were placed in Westminster Abbey. Among the pall-bearers were Rudyard Kipling, J. M. Barrie, John Galsworthy and Bernard Shaw.

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass:
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by;
War's annals will fade into night
Ere their story die.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leaned upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled vine-stems scored the sky
Like strings from broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant;
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice burst forth among
   The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
   Of joy unlimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
   In blast-beruffled plume,
Has chosen thus to fling his soul
   Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
   Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
   Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
   His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope, whereof he knew
   And I was unaware.

THE PROSPECT

The twigs of the birch imprint the December sky
Like branching veins upon a thin old hand;
I think of summer-time, yes, of last July,
When she was beneath them, greeting a gathered band
Of the urban and bland.

Iced airs wheeze through the skeletoned hedge from the north,
With steady snores, and a numbing that threatens snow,
And skaters pass; and merry boys go forth
To look for slides. But well, well do I know
Whither I would go!

WAITING BOTH

A star looks down at me,
And says: "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree:
What do you mean to do —
      Mean to do?"

I say: “For all I know,
Wait, and let Time go by,
Till my change come.” — “Just so,”
The star says: “So mean I —
So mean I.”

AUSTIN DOBSON

(Henry) Austin Dobson was born at Plymouth, in 1840, and was educated in Wales and on the Continent. In 1856, he received a clerkship in The Board of Trade and remained in official life a great part of his life.

His first collection, *Vignettes in Rhyme* (1873), attracted attention by the ease with which the author managed his dexterous and most difficult effects. With *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877), *Old World Idylls* (1883) and *At the Sign of the Lyre* (1885), it was evident that a new master of *vers de société* had arisen. The crispness and clean delicacy of his verse make him the peer of Prior, Praed and Thomas Hood.

During the latter part of his life, he devoted himself to a type of semi-biographical essay, intended to preserve the spirit of some nearly- or wholly-forgotten celebrity. In this form, his prose is scarcely less distinctive than his verse; his detailed and charmingly dispensed knowledge of the time of Queen Anne gives to his writings its own special flavor of “archaic gentility.”

Although most of his rhymes are charming rather than profound, certain pages, like “Before Sedan,” are memorable for their serious clarity. Dobson died September 3, 1921.

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O’ertop the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind’s sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
  Saying — "He held his pen in trust
  To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
    In after days!

BEFORE SEDAN

"*The dead hand clasped a letter.*"
— *Special Correspondence.*

Here in this leafy place
  Quiet he lies,
Cold with his sightless face
  Turned to the skies;
'Tis but another dead;
All you can say is said.

Carry his body hence, —
  Kings must have slaves;
Kings climb to eminence
  Over men's graves:
So this man's eye is dim; —
Throw the earth over him.

What was the white you touched,
  There, at his side?
Paper his hand had clutched
  Tight ere he died; —
Message or wish, may be;
Smooth the folds out and see.

Hardly the worst of us
  Here could have smiled!
Only the tremulous
  Words of a child;
Prattle, that has for stops
Just a few ruddy drops.

Look. She is sad to miss,
  Morning and night,
His — her dead father's — kiss;
  Tries to be bright,
Good to mamma, and sweet.
That is all. "Marguerite."

Ah, if beside the dead
  Slumbered the pain!
Ah, if the hearts that bled
  Slept with the slain!
If the grief died; — but no.
Death will not have it so.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was born at Crabbet Park, Crawley, Sussex, in 1840. He was educated at St. Mary's College, Oscott, and was a member of the diplomatic service from 1858 to 1870. He spent many years in the East, his observations making him strongly sympathetic to lesser nationalities and all the down-trodden. He favored the cause of the Egyptians; his voice was always lifted for justice to Ireland.

As a poet, he is best known by his *The Love Sonnets of Proteus* (1881) and *The New Pilgrimage* (1889). Both volumes reveal a deep, philosophical nature expressing itself in terms of high seriousness.

His remarkable *My Diaries* appeared when Blunt was an octogenarian, in 1921. He died in London, September 11, 1922.

LAUGHTER AND DEATH

There is no laughter in the natural world
Of beast or fish or bird, though no sad doubt
Of their futurity to them unfurled
Has dared to check the mirth-compelling shout.
The lion roars his solemn thunder out
To sleeping woods. The eagle screams her cry.
Even the lark must strain a serious throat
To hurl his blest defiance at the sky.

Fear, anger, jealousy, have found a voice.
Love's pain or rapture the brute bosoms swell.
Nature has symbols for her nobler joys,
Her nobler sorrows. Who has dared foretell
That only man, by some sad mockery,
Should learn to laugh who learns that he must die?

ANDREW LANG

Andrew Lang, critic and essayist, was born in 1844 and educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Besides his many well-known translations of Homer, Theocritus and the Greek Anthology, he published numerous biographical works.

As a poet, his chief claim rests on his delicate light verse. *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872), *Ballades in Blue China* (1880), and *Rhymes à la Mode* (1884) disclose Lang as a lesser Austin Dobson. His death occurred July 20, 1912.

SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown and blithe,
  What is the word, methinks, ye know,
Endless over-word that the Scythe
  Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
  Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
  Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

Hush, ah, hush, the Scythes are saying,
  Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;
Hush they say to the grasses swaying;
  Hush they sing to the clover deep!
Hush — 'tis the lullaby Time is singing —
  Hush and heed not for all things pass;
Hush, ah, hush! and the Scythes are swinging
  Over the clover, over the grass!

Robert (Seymour) Bridges was born in 1844 and educated at Eton and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After traveling extensively, he studied medicine in London and practiced until 1882. Most of his poems, like his occasional plays, are classical in tone as well as treatment. He was appointed poet laureate in 1913, following Alfred Austin. His command of the secrets of rhythm, especially exemplified in *Shorter Poems* (1891), through a subtle versification give his lines a firm delicacy of pattern.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

The day begins to droop —
  Its course is done:
But nothing tells the place
  Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,
  And up the lane
You may hear, but cannot see,
  The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums
  In the farm hard by:
Its lowering smoke is lost
  In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,
  And all night through
The dropping will not cease
  In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house
  Must keep his chair:
He knows he will never again
  Breathe the spring air:

His heart is worn with work;
  He is giddy and sick
If he rise to go as far
  As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,
His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
Of darkness and tears.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

The Irish-English singer, Arthur (William Edgar) O'Shaughnessy, was born in London in 1844. He was connected, for a while, with the British Museum, and was transferred later to the Department of Natural History. His first literary success, *Epic of Women* (1870), promised a splendid future for the young poet, a promise strengthened by his *Music and Moonlight* (1874). Always delicate in health, his hopes were dashed by periods of illness. He met an early death in London in 1881.

The poem here reprinted, like all of O'Shaughnessy's, owes much to its editor. The "Ode," which has become one of the classics of this age, originally had seven verses, the last four being mere versifying. When Palgrave compiled his *Golden Treasury*, he recognized the great difference between the first three inspired stanzas and the others — and calmly and courageously dropped the final four.

William Alexander Percy recently performed a similar service for this singer who, nine-tenths of the time, was an undistinguished minor poet. It is a series of liberties he has taken in his *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy* (1922), but the editorial omissions are all justifiable.

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We built up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:

One man with a dream, at pleasure,
  Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
  Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
  In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
  And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
  To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
  Or one that is coming to birth.

ALICE MEYNELL

Alice (Christina Thompson) Meynell was born in 1849, was educated privately by her father and spent a great part of her early life in Italy. She married Wilfrid Meynell, the friend and editor of Francis Thompson. Her daughter, Viola Meynell, is a poet and novelist; her son, Francis Meynell, is the distinguished printer and publisher. Both were the subjects of poems by Francis Thompson, the latter being his god-child.

Her work, which is high in conception and fine in execution, is distinguished by its pensive, religious note. Her first four volumes appeared, in a condensed form, in *Collected Poems* (1913). Since then, her most representative work is *A Father of Women and Other Poems* (1917). She died in 1922.

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks — the lady of my delight —
  A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
  She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
  And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night,
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

William Ernest Henley was born in 1849 and was educated at the Grammar School of Gloucester. From childhood he was afflicted with a tuberculous disease which finally necessitated the amputation of a foot. His *Hospital Verses*, those vivid precursors of current free verse, are a record of the time when he was at the infirmary at Edinburgh; they are sharp with the sights, sensations, even the actual smells of the sick-room. In spite (or, more probably, because) of his continued poor health, Henley never ceased to worship strength and energy; courage and a triumphant belief in a harsh world shine out of the athletic *London Voluntaries* (1892) and the lightest and most musical lyrics in *Hawthorn and Lavender* (1898).

After a brilliant and varied career (see Preface), devoted mostly to journalism, Henley died in 1903.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
  I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
  My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
  Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
  Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
  How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
  I am the captain of my soul.

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
  The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
  But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
  And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
  Our hearts and lips together.

MARGARITÆ SORORI

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, grey city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.
The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires

Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night —
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in 1850. He was at first trained to be a lighthouse engineer, following the profession of his family. However, he studied law instead, was admitted to the bar in 1875, and abandoned law for literature a few years later. His poor health made him leave England; he lived, at various times, in Switzerland and the United States, and finally settled in the South Seas.

Though primarily a novelist, Stevenson has left one immortal book of poetry which is equally at home in the nursery and the library: *A Child's Garden of Verses* (first published in 1885) is second only to Mother Goose's own collection in its lyrical simplicity and universal appeal. *Underwoods* (1887) and *Ballads* (1890) complete his entire poetic output. As a genial essayist, he is not unworthy to be ranked with Charles Lamb. As a romancer, his fame rests securely on *Kidnapped*, the unfinished masterpiece, *Weir of Hermiston*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and that eternal classic of youth, *Treasure Island*.

Stevenson died after a long and dogged fight with his illness, in the Samoan Islands in 1894.

ROMANCE

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

OSCAR WILDE

Oscar Wilde was born at Dublin, Ireland, in 1856, and even as an undergraduate at Oxford he was marked for a brilliant career. When he was a trifle over twenty-one years of age, he won the Newdigate Prize with his poem *Ravenna*.

Giving himself almost entirely to prose, he speedily became known as a writer of brilliant epigrammatic essays and even more brilliant paradoxical plays such as *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest.* His aphorisms and flippancies were quoted everywhere; his fame as a wit was only surpassed by his notoriety as an æsthete. (See Preface.)

Most of his poems in prose (such as *The Happy Prince*, *The Birthday of the Infanta* and *The Fisherman and His Soul*) are more imaginative and richly colored than his verse; but in one long poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), he sounded his deepest, simplest and most enduring note. Prison was, in many ways, a regeneration for Wilde. It not only produced *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* but made possible his most poignant piece of writing, *De Profundis*, only a small part of which has been published.

Wilde's society plays, flashing and cynical, were the forerunners of Bernard Shaw's audacious and far more searching ironies.

Wilde died at Paris, November 30, 1900.

REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near
    Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
    The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
    Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
    Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
    She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
    Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
    Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
    She is at rest.

Peace, peace; she cannot hear
    Lyric or sonnet;
All my life's buried here,
    Heap earth upon it.

John Davidson was born at Barrhead, Renfrewshire, in 1857. His *Ballads and Songs* (1895) and *New Ballads* (1897) attained a sudden but too short-lived popularity, and his great promise was quenched by an apathetic public and by his own growing disillusion and despair. The later *Holiday and Other Poems* (1906) made practically no impression on the critics. His somber yet direct poetry never tired of repeating his favorite theme: "Man is but the Universe grown conscious."

Davidson died by his own hand at Penzance in 1909.

IMAGINATION

(*From "New Year's Eve"*)

There is a dish to hold the sea,
  A brazier to contain the sun,
A compass for the galaxy,
  A voice to wake the dead and done!

That minister of ministers,
  Imagination, gathers up
The undiscovered Universe,
  Like jewels in a jasper cup.

Its flame can mingle north and south;
  Its accent with the thunder strive;
The ruddy sentence of its mouth
  Can make the ancient dead alive.

The mart of power, the fount of will,
  The form and mould of every star,
The source and bound of good and ill,
  The key of all the things that are,

Imagination, new and strange
  In every age, can turn the year;
Can shift the poles and lightly change
  The mood of men, the world's career.

William Watson was born at Burley-in-Wharfedale, Yorkshire, August 2, 1858. He achieved his first wide success through his long and eloquent poems on Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson — poems that attempted, and sometimes successfully, to combine the manners of these masters. *The Hope of the World* (1897) contains some of his most characteristic verse.

It was understood that he would be appointed poet laureate upon the death of Alfred Austin. But some of his "radical" and semi-political poems are supposed to have displeased the powers at Court, and the honor went to Robert Bridges. His best work, which has both dignity and imagination, may be found in *Selected Poems*, published in 1903. The more recent books, such as *The Man Who Saw* (1917), are less interesting.

SONG[1]

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears,
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears.
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

ESTRANGEMENT[1]

So, without breach, we fall apart,
Tacitly sunder — neither you nor I
Conscious of one intelligible Why,
And both, from severance, winning equal smart.

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[1] From *The Hope of the World* by William Watson. Copyright, 1897, by Dodd, Mead and Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

So, with resigned and acquiescent heart,
Whene'er your name on some chance lip may lie,
I seem to see an alien shade pass by,
A spirit wherein I have no lot or part.

Thus may a captive, in some fortress grim,
From casual speech betwixt his warders, learn
That June on her triumphal progress goes
Through arched and bannered woodlands; while for him
She is a legend emptied of concern,
And idle is the rumour of the rose.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Born in 1857 at Preston, Lancashire, Francis Thompson was educated at Owen's College, Manchester. Later he tried all manner of ways of earning a living. He was, at various times, assistant in a boot-shop, medical student, collector for a bookseller, and homeless vagabond; there was a period in his life when he sold matches on the streets of London. He was discovered in terrible poverty (having given up everything except poetry and opium) by Wilfrid Meynell, the editor of a magazine to which he had sent some verses the year before.

Supported and befriended by Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, he broke off his opium habits (although he never regained complete health) and started to write with renewed energy. Almost immediately thereafter he became famous. His exalted mysticism is seen at its purest in "A Fallen Yew" and "The Hound of Heaven." Coventry Patmore, the distinguished poet of an earlier period, says of the latter poem (unfortunately too long to quote in this collection), "It is one of the very few *great* odes of which our language can boast."

Sister Songs, following Thompson's first volume, appeared in 1895, *New Poems* in 1897. His prose, containing the famous essay on Shelley, was not collected until many years later. In all his work, he was never anyone but himself; a mystic unaware of any world but that within us — a mystic as much enraptured by strange colors, curious words (he delighted in the ring of archaic syllables) and quaint symbols as a child.

Thompson died, after a fragile and spasmodic life, in St. John's Wood in November, 1907, various collected editions of his poems being issued shortly after his death.

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill —
O breath of the distant surf! —

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs;
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat all day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.
She gave me tokens three: —
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word, — strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close:
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan,
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

FROM "ODE TO THE SETTING SUN"

How came the entombèd tree a light-bearer,
Though sunk in lightless lair?
Friend of the forgers of earth,
Mate of the earthquake and thunders volcanic,
Clasped in the arms of the forces Titanic

Which rock like a cradle the girth
Of the ether-hung world;
Swart son of the swarthy mine,
When flame on the breath of his nostrils feeds
How is his countenance half-divine,
Like thee in thy sanguine weeds?
Thou gavest him his light,
Though sepultured in night
Beneath the dead bones of a perished world;
Over his prostrate form
Though cold, and heat, and storm,
The mountainous wrack of a creation hurled.

Who made the splendid rose
Saturate with purple glows;
Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume-press
Whence the wind vintages
Gushes of warmèd fragrance richer far
Than all the flavorous ooze of Cyprus' vats?
Lo, in yon gale which waves her green cymar,
With dusky cheeks burnt red
She sways her heavy head,
Drunk with the must of her own odorousness;
While in a moted trouble the vexed gnats
Maze, and vibrate, and tease the noontide hush.
Who girt dissolvèd lightnings in the grape?
Summered the opal with an Irised flush?
Is it not thou that dost the tulip drape,
And huest the daffodilly,
Yet who hast snowed the lily,
And her frail sister, whom the waters name,
Dost vestal-vesture 'mid the blaze of June,
Cold as the new-sprung girlhood of the moon
Ere Autumn's kiss sultry her cheek with flame?
Thou sway'st thy sceptred beam
O'er all delight and dream,
Beauty is beautiful but in thy glance:
And like a jocund maid
In garland flowers arrayed,
Before thy ark Earth keeps her sacred dance.

TO A SNOWFLAKE

What heart could have thought you? —
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapour? —
" God was my shaper.
Passing surmisal,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapour,
To lust of his mind: —
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

A. E. HOUSMAN

A. E. Housman was born March 26, 1859, and, after a classical education, he was, for ten years, a Higher Division Clerk in H. M. Patent Office. Later in life, he became a teacher.

Up to 1922 Housman had published only one volume of original verse, but that volume, *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), is known wherever modern English poetry is read. Underneath his ironies, there is a rustic humor that has many subtle variations. From a melodic standpoint, *A Shropshire Lad* is a collection of exquisite, haunting and almost perfect songs. After a silence of almost twenty-six years, a second volume, significantly entitled *Last Poems*, appeared in 1922. Here, once more, we have the note of pessimism sung in a jaunty rhythm and an incongruously jolly key. The Shropshire Lad lives again to pipe his mournful tunes of betrayal, lovesick lads, deserted girls and suicides with an enviable simplicity and an almost flawless command of his instrument.

Housman has been a professor of Latin since 1892 and, besides his immortal set of lyrics, has edited Juvenal and the books of Manilius.

REVEILLÉ

Wake: the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:
Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
" Who'll beyond the hills away? "

Towns and countries woo together,
Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber
Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad: when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep.

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

"ON THE IDLE HILL OF SUMMER"

On the idle hill of summer,
Sleepy with the flow of streams,
Far I hear the steady drummer
Drumming like a noise in dreams.

Far and near and low and louder
On the roads of earth go by,
Dear to friends and food for powder,
Soldiers marching, all to die.

East and west on fields forgotten
Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
Lovely lads, all dead and rotten;
None that go return again.

Far the calling bugles hollo,
High the screaming fife replies,
Gay the files of scarlet follow:
Woman bore me, I will rise.

TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows,
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honours out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

Katharine Tynan was born at Dublin in 1861, and educated at the Convent of St. Catherine at Drogheda. She married Henry Hinkson, a lawyer and author, in 1893. Her poetry is largely actuated by religious themes, and much of her verse is devotional and yet distinctive. In *New Poems* (1911) she is at her best; graceful, meditative and with occasional notes of deep pathos.

SHEEP AND LAMBS

All in the April morning,
  April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
  Pass'd me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
  Pass'd me by on the road;
All in an April evening
  I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
  With a weak human cry;
I thought on the Lamb of God
  Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
  Dewy pastures are sweet:
Rest for the little bodies,
  Rest for the little feet.

Rest for the Lamb of God
  Up on the hill-top green;
Only a cross of shame
  Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
  April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
  And thought on the Lamb of God.

Henry Newbolt was born at Bilston, Staffordshire, in 1862. His early work was frankly imitative of Tennyson; he even attempted to add to the Arthurian legends with a drama in blank verse entitled *Mordred* (1895). It was not until he wrote his sea-ballads that he struck his own note. With the publication of *Admirals All* (1897) his fame was widespread. The popularity of his lines was due not so much to the subject-matter of Newbolt's verse as to the breeziness of his music, the solid beat of rhythm, the vigorous swing of his stanzas.

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,
" Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag's flyin',
They shall find him, ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago.

Born in Wales in 1865, Arthur Symons' first few publications revealed an intellectual rather than an emotional passion. Those volumes, *Days and Nights* (1889), *Silhouettes* (1892), *London Nights* (1895), were full of the artifice of the period, but Symons' technical skill and frequent analysis often saved the poems from complete decadence.

The best of Symons' poems have a rare delicacy of touch; they breathe an intimacy in which the sophistication is less cynical, the sensuousness more restrained. His various collections of essays and stories reflect the same peculiar blend of intellectuality and perfumed romanticism that one finds in his poems.

Most of his poetry up to 1902 was collected in two volumes, *Poems. The Fool of the World* appeared in 1907.

IN THE WOOD OF FINVARA

I have grown tired of sorrow and human tears;
Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears,
A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.

I have grown tired of rapture and love's desire;
Love is a flaming heart, and its flames aspire
Till they cloud the soul in the smoke of a windy fire.

I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood;
Here between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude.

Here, in the fairy wood, between sea and sea,
I have heard the song of a fairy bird in a tree,
And the peace that is not in the world has flown to me.

THE CRYING OF WATER

O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand,
All night long crying with a mournful cry,
As I lie and listen, and cannot understand
The voice of my heart in my side or the voice of the sea,
O water crying for rest, is it I, is it I?
All night long the water is crying to me.

Unresting water, there shall never be rest
Till the last moon drop and the last tide fail,
And the fire of the end begin to burn in the west;
And the heart shall be weary and wonder and cry like the
sea,
All life long crying without avail,
As the water all night long is crying to me.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Born at Sandymount, Dublin, in 1865, the son of John B. Yeats, the Irish artist, the greater part of William Butler Yeats' childhood was spent in Sligo. Here he became imbued with the power and richness of native folk-lore; he drank in the racy quality through the quaint fairy stories and old wives' tales of the Irish peasantry. (Later he published a collection of these same stories.)

It was in the activities of a "Young Ireland" society that Yeats became identified with the new spirit; he dreamed of a national poetry that would be written in English and yet would be definitely Irish. In a few years he became one of the leaders in the Celtic revival. He worked incessantly for the cause, both as propagandist and playwright; and, though his mysticism at times seemed the product of a cult rather than a Celt, his symbolic dramas were acknowledged to be full of a haunting, other-world spirituality. (See Preface.)

The Hour Glass (1904), his second volume of "Plays for an Irish Theatre," includes his best one-act dramas with the exception of his unforgettable *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894). *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) contains several of his most beautiful and characteristic poems; a later collection, *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), displays his recent, more colloquial manner. A definitive *Collected Works* in six volumes was published by The Macmillan Company in 1924. This age has produced few lyrics more haunting than Yeats', few indeed as musical as those here reprinted.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow.
And then I must scrub, and bake, and sweep,
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;
But the young lie long and dream in their bed
Of the matching of ribbons, the blue and the red,
And their day goes over in idleness,
And they sigh if the wind but lift up a tress.
While I must work, because I am old
And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

AN OLD SONG RESUNG

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Born at Bombay, India, December 30, 1865, (Joseph) Rudyard Kipling, the author of a dozen contemporary classics, was educated in England. He returned, however, to India and took a position on the staff of *The Lahore Civil and Military Gazette*, writing for the Indian press until about 1890, when he went to England, where, with the exception of a short sojourn in America, he has lived ever since.

Soldiers Three (1888) was the first of six collections of short stories brought out in "Wheeler's Railway Library." It was followed by the far more sensitive and searching *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Under the Deodars* and *The Phantom 'Rikshaw*, which contains two of the best and most convincing ghost-stories in modern literature.

These tales, however, display only one side of Kipling's extraordinary talents. As a writer of children's stories, he has few living equals. *Wee Willie Winkie*, which contains that stirring and heroic fragment "Drums of the Fore and Aft," is only a trifle less notable than his more obviously juvenile collections. *Just-So Stories* and the two *Jungle Books* (prose interspersed with lively rhymes) are classics for young people of all ages. *Kim*, the novel of a super-Mowgli grown up, is a more mature masterpiece.

Considered solely as a poet (see Preface), Kipling is one of the most vigorous figures of his time. The spirit of romance surges under his realities. His brisk lines conjure up the tang of a countryside in autumn, the tingle of salt spray, the rude sentiment of ruder natures, the snapping of a banner, the lurch and rumble of the sea. His poetry is woven of the stuff of myths but it never loses its hold on actualities.

Yet it was not merely his realism that made him so popular. What attracted the average reader to Kipling was his attitude to the world's work. Where others sang of lilies and leisure, Kipling celebrated difficulties, duty, hard labor; where others evoked Greek demi-gods, he hailed bridge-builders, engineers, sweating stokers — all those who exulted in the job.

Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. His varied poems have been finally collected in a remarkable one-volume *Inclusive Edition* (1885–1918), an indispensable part of any student's library. Subsequent to this collection, a new volume, *The Years Between*, was published in 1919.

GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But if it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental *bhisti*,[1] Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! *slippy hitherao!*
Water, get it! *Panee lao!* [2]
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

---

[1] The *bhisti*, or water-carrier, attached to regiments in India, is often one of the most devoted of the Queen's servants. He is also appreciated by the men.

[2] Bring water swiftly.

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a twisty piece o' rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "*Harry By!*"[1]
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some *juldee*[2] in it,
Or I'll *marrow*[3] you this minute,
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done,
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is *mussick*[4] on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide,
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!

It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

---

[1] Tommy Atkins' equivalent for "O Brother!"
[2] Speed.
[3] Hit you.
[4] Water-skin.

I shan't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water — green;
It was crawlin' an' it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.

It was " Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake, git the water, Gunga Din! "

'E carried me away
To where a *dooli* lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died:
" I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone —
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!

Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

THE RETURN[1]

Peace is declared, and I return
  To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
  The size and meanin' of the game.
I did no more than others did,
  I don't know where the change began;
I started as an average kid,
  I finished as a thinkin' man.

If England was what England seems
  An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
  'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
  I 'eard it in my comrade's tone;
I saw it on my neighbour's cheek
  Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me — not pride,
  Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
  The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
  Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains that never let you near,
  An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
  The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills —
  These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
  An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
  For owners when a column passed;

---

[1] From *The Five Nations* by Rudyard Kipling. Copyright by Doubleday, Page & Company and A. P. Watt & Son.

An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
  Men, met by night, you never knew
Until — 'is face — by shellfire seen —
  Once — an' struck off. They taught me, too.

The day's lay-out — the mornin' sun
  Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
  An' the full roar that lasts till night;
An' the pore dead that look so old
  An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold —
  These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years —
  A thousand Places left be'ind —
An' men from both two 'emispheres
  Discussin' things of every kind;
So much more near than I 'ad known,
  So much more great than I 'ad guessed —
An' me, like all the rest, alone —
  But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me — not pride,
  Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
  The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
  To do with little things again. . . .
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
  Look after me in Thamesfontein!

If England was what England seems
  An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
  'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!

AN ASTROLOGER'S SONG[1]

To the Heavens above us
O look and behold
The Planets that love us
All harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

All thoughts, all desires,
That are under the sun,
Are one with their fires,
As we also are one:
All matter, all spirit,
All fashion, all frame,
Receive and inherit
Their strength from the same.

(Oh, man that deniest
All power save thine own,
Their power in the highest
Is mightily shown.
Not less in the lowest
That power is made clear.
Oh, man, if thou knowest,
What treasure is here!)

Earth quakes in her throes
And we wonder for why!
But the blind planet knows
When her ruler is nigh;
And, attuned since Creation
To perfect accord,
She thrills in her station
And yearns to her Lord.

---

[1] From *Rewards and Fairies* by Rudyard Kipling. Copyright by Doubleday, Page & Company and A. P. Watt & Son.

The waters have risen,
The springs are unbound —
The floods break their prison,
And ravin around.
No rampart withstands 'em,
Their fury will last,
Till the Sign that commands 'em
Sinks low or swings past.

Through abysses unproven
And gulfs beyond thought,
Our portion is woven,
Our burden is brought.
Yet They that prepare it,
Whose Nature we share,
Make us who must bear it
Well able to bear.

Though terrors o'ertake us
We'll not be afraid.
No power can unmake us,
Save that which has made.
Nor yet beyond reason
Or hope shall we fall —
All things have their season,
And Mercy crowns all!

Then, doubt not, ye fearful —
The Eternal is King —
Up, heart, and be cheerful,
And lustily sing: —
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

L'ENVOI

What is the moral? Who rides may read.
When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed;
But a fool to wait for the laggard behind;
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry, "Turn again."
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone —
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself —
Falls by himself with himself to blame;
One may attain and to him is the pelf,
Loot of the city in Gold or Fame:
Plunder of earth shall be all his own:
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

"TOMMY"

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no redcoats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again, an' to myself sez I:
O, it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys. the band begins to play,
O, it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theater as sober as could be,
They give a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;

They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' " Tommy wait outside ";
But it's " Special train for Atkins," when the trooper's on the tide,
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, etc.

O, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken sodgers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' " Tommy, 'ow's yer soul? "
But it's " Thin red line of 'eroes " when the drums begin to roll,
The drums begin to roll, my boys, etc.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints.
While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' " Tommy fall be'ind ";
But it's " Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind,
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, etc.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face,
The Widow's uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' " Chuck him out, the brute! "
But it's " Saviour of 'is country " when the guns begin to shoot;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool — you bet that Tommy sees!

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old,
  Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
  The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
  On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word —
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Born in 1867, Lionel (Pigot) Johnson received a classical education at Oxford, and his poetry is a faithful reflection of his studies in Greek and Latin literatures. Though he allied himself with the modern Irish poets, his Celtic origin is a literary myth; Johnson, having been converted to Catholicism in 1891, became imbued with Catholic and, later, with Irish traditions. His verse, while sometimes strained and overdecorated, is chastely designed, rich and, like that of the Cavalier poets of the seventeenth century, mystically devotional. *Poems* (1895) contains his best work.

Johnson died in 1902 as a result of an accident.

MYSTIC AND CAVALIER

Go from me: I am one of those who fall.
What! hath no cold wind swept your heart at all,
In my sad company? Before the end,
Go from me, dear my friend!

Yours are the victories of light: your feet
Rest from good toil, where rest is brave and sweet:
But after warfare in a mourning gloom,
I rest in clouds of doom.

Have you not read so, looking in these eyes?
Is it the common light of the pure skies
Lights up their shadowy depths? The end is set:
Though the end be not yet.

When gracious music stirs, and all is bright,
And beauty triumphs through a courtly night;
When I too joy, a man like other men:
Yet, am I like them, then?

And in the battle, when the horsemen sweep
Against a thousand deaths, and fall on sleep:
Who ever sought that sudden calm, if I
Sought not? yet could not die!

Seek with thine eyes to pierce this crystal sphere:
Canst read a fate there, prosperous and clear?
Only the mists, only the weeping clouds,
Dimness and airy shrouds.

Beneath, what angels are at work? What powers
Prepare the secret of the fatal hours?
See! the mists tremble, and the clouds are stirred:
When comes the calling word?

The clouds are breaking from the crystal ball,
Breaking and clearing: and I look to fall.
When the cold winds and airs of portent sweep,
My spirit may have sleep.

O rich and sounding voices of the air!
Interpreters and prophets of despair:
Priests of a fearful sacrament! I come,
To make with you mine home.

ERNEST DOWSON

Ernest Dowson was born at Belmont Hill in Kent in 1867. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett (Browning's "Waring"), who was at one time Prime Minister of New Zealand. Dowson, practically an invalid all his life, hid himself in miserable surroundings; for almost two years he lived in sordid supper-houses known as "cabmen's shelters." He literally drank himself to death.

His delicate and fantastic poetry was an attempt to escape from a reality too big and brutal for him. His passionate lyric, "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion," a triumph of despair and disillusion, is an outburst in which Dowson epitomized himself — "One of the greatest lyrical poems of our time," writes Arthur Symons; "in it he has for once said everything, and he has said it to an intoxicating and perhaps immortal music."

Dowson died obscure in 1900, one of the finest of modern minor poets. His life was the tragedy of a weak nature buffeted by a strong and merciless environment.

TO ONE IN BEDLAM

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw that, miserable, line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares.

Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,
And make his melancholy germane to the stars'?

O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!

ENVOY

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
  Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
    We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
  Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
    Within a dream.

A. E.

(*George William Russell*)

At Lurgan, a tiny town in the north of Ireland, George William Russell was born in 1867. He moved to Dublin when he was ten years old and, as a young man, helped to form the group that gave rise to the Irish Renascence — the group of which William Butler Yeats, Doctor Douglas Hyde, Katharine Tynan and Lady Gregory were brilliant members. Besides being a splendid mystical poet, A. E. is a painter of note, a fiery nationalist, a distinguished sociologist, a public speaker, a student of economics and one of the heads of the Irish Agricultural Association.

The best of his mystical poetry is in *Homeward: Songs by the Way* (1894) and *The Earth Breath and Other Poems*. Yeats has spoken of these poems as "revealing in all things a kind of scented flame consuming them from within." A generous *Collected Poems* was published in 1926.

CONTINUITY

No sign is made while empires pass,
The flowers and stars are still His care,
The constellations hid in grass,
The golden miracles in air.

Life in an instant will be rent,
Where death is glittering blind and wild —
The Heavenly Brooding is intent
To that last instant on Its child.

It breathes the glow in brain and heart,
Life is made magical. Until
Body and spirit are apart,
The Everlasting works Its will.

In that wild orchid that your feet
In their next falling shall destroy,
Minute and passionate and sweet
The Mighty Master holds His joy.

Though the crushed jewels droop and fade,
The Artist's labors will not cease,
And of the ruins shall be made
Some yet more lovely masterpiece.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Far up the dim twilight fluttered
  Moth-wings of vapour and flame:
The lights danced over the mountains,
  Star after star they came.

The lights grew thicker unheeded,
  For silent and still were we;
Our hearts were drunk with a beauty
  Our eyes could never see.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Born in 1868, Stephen Phillips is best known as the author of *Herod* (1900), *Paolo and Francesca* (1899), and *Ulysses* (1902); a poetic playwright who succeeded in reviving, for a brief interval, the blank verse drama on the modern stage. Hailed at first with extravagant and almost incredible praise, Phillips lived to see his most popular dramas discarded and his new ones, such as *Pietro of Siena* (1910), unproduced and unnoticed.

Phillips failed to "restore" poetic drama because he was, first of all, a lyric rather than a dramatic poet. In spite of certain moments of rhetorical splendor, his scenes are spectacular; his inspiration is too often derived from other models.

As a poet, his reputation has shrunk almost as much as his popularity. Yet, in spite of a too ornate, artificial diction, parts of *Marpessa* (1900) and *Lyrics and Dramas* (1913) achieve a ringing if traditional eloquence. Phillips died in 1915.

FRAGMENT FROM "HEROD"

Herod speaks:
I dreamed last night of a dome of beaten gold
To be a counter-glory to the Sun.
There shall the eagle blindly dash himself,
There the first beam shall strike, and there the moon
Shall aim all night her argent archery;
And it shall be the tryst of sundered stars,

The haunt of dead and dreaming Solomon;
Shall send a light upon the lost in Hell,
And flashings upon faces without hope. —
And I will think in gold and dream in silver,
Imagine in marble and conceive in bronze,
Till it shall dazzle pilgrim nations
And stammering tribes from undiscovered lands,
Allure the living God out of the bliss,
And all the streaming seraphim from heaven.

A DREAM

My dead love came to me, and said:
  "God gives me one hour's rest,
To spend with thee on earth again:
  How shall we spend it best?"

"Why, as of old," I said; and so
  We quarrelled, as of old:
But, when I turned to make my peace,
  That one short hour was told.

LAURENCE BINYON

(Robert) Laurence Binyon was born at Lancaster, August 10, 1869, a cousin of Stephen Phillips; in *Primavera* (1890) their early poems appeared together. Binyon's subsequent volumes showed little distinction until he published *London Visions*, which, in an enlarged edition in 1908, revealed a gift of characterization and a turn of speech in surprising contrast to his previous academic *Lyrical Poems* (1894). *Selected Poems* (1924) contains an excellently arranged sequence of Binyon's best. *The Sirens* (1924) is a long and elaborate ode in which the poet's slow-paced rhythms have great scope.

A SONG

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth.
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow,
If your own heart you would know;
For the spirit born to bless
Lives but in its own excess.

ANTHONY C. DEANE

Anthony C. Deane was born in 1870 and was the Seatonian prizeman in 1905 at Clare College, Cambridge. He has been Vicar of All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, since 1916. His long list of light verse and essays includes many excellent parodies, the most delightful being found in his *New Ryhmes for Old* (1901).

THE BALLAD OF THE *BILLYCOCK*

It was the good ship *Billycock*, with thirteen men aboard,
Athirst to grapple with their country's foes, —
A crew, 'twill be admitted, not numerically fitted
To navigate a battleship in prose.

It was the good ship *Billycock* put out from Plymouth Sound,
While lustily the gallant heroes cheered,
And all the air was ringing with the merry bo'sun's singing,
Till in the gloom of night she disappeared.

But when the morning broke on her, behold, a dozen ships,
A dozen ships of France around her lay,
(Or, if that isn't plenty, I will gladly make it twenty),
And hemmed her close in Salamander Bay.

Then to the Lord High Admiral there spake a cabin-boy:
" Methinks," he said, " the odds are somewhat great,
And, in the present crisis, a cabin-boy's advice is
That you and France had better arbitrate! "

" Pooh! " said the Lord High Admiral, and slapped his manly chest,

"Pooh! That would be both cowardly and wrong;
Shall I, a gallant fighter, give the needy ballad-writer
No suitable material for song?

"Nay — is the shorthand-writer here? — I tell you, one and all,
I mean to do my duty, as I ought;
With eager satisfaction let us clear the decks for action
And fight the craven Frenchmen!" So they fought.

And (after several stanzas which as yet are incomplete,
Describing all the fight in epic style)
When the *Billycock* was going, she'd a dozen prizes towing
(Or twenty, as above) in single file!

Ah, long in glowing English hearts the story will remain,
The memory of that historic day,
And, while we rule the ocean, we will picture with emotion
The *Billycock* in Salamander Bay!

P.S. — I've lately noticed that the critics — who, I think,
In praising *my* productions are remiss —
Quite easily are captured, and profess themselves enraptured,
By patriotic ditties such as this,

For making which you merely take some dauntless Englishmen,
Guns, heroism, slaughter, and a fleet —
Ingredients you mingle in a metre with a jingle,
And there you have your masterpiece complete!

Why, then, with labour infinite, produce a book of verse
To languish on the "All for Twopence" shelf?
The ballad bold and breezy comes particularly easy —
I mean to take to writing it myself!

According to his own biography, William Henry Davies was born in a public-house called Church House at Newport, in the County of Monmouthshire, April 20, 1870, of Welsh parents. He was, until Bernard Shaw "discovered" him, a cattleman, a berry-picker, a panhandler — in short, a vagabond. At the age of thirty-four he began to write poetry. In a preface to Davies' second book, *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1906), Shaw describes how the volume came into his hands:

"In the year 1905 I received by post a volume of poems by one William H. Davies, whose address was The Farm House, Kennington, S. E. The author, as far as I could guess, had walked into a printer's or stationer's shop; handed in his manuscript; and ordered his book as he might have ordered a pair of boots. It was marked 'price, half a crown.' An accompanying letter asked me very civilly if I required a half-crown book of verses; and if so, would I please send the author the half crown: if not, would I return the book. This was attractively simple and sensible. I opened the book, and was more puzzled than ever; for before I had read three lines I perceived that the author was a real poet. His work was not in the least strenuous or modern; there was indeed no sign of his ever having read anything otherwise than as a child reads."

It is more than likely that Davies' first notoriety as a tramp-poet who had ridden the rails in the United States and had had his right foot cut off by a train in Canada, obscured his merits as a genuine singer. Even his early *The Soul's Destroyer* (1907) revealed that simplicity which is as *naïf* as it is strange. The volumes that followed are more clearly melodious, more like the visionary wonder of Blake. Theirs is that bird-like artlessness which has made Davies the leader of the group of post-war bucolic poets. (See Preface.) Untouched by current thought or fashions in verse, Davies writes of cows and lambs, of winds and trees, with an air of childlike surprise; he rhymes these things as though no one had ever sung of them before.

Davies has published thirteen volumes of original poetry since his first offering in 1906. Most of the poems contained in these books have been assembled — with the exception of the most recent work mentioned below — in *Collected Poems: First Series* (1916) and *Collected Poems: Second Series* (1923). *Selected Poems* with decorations appeared in 1925. *A Poet's Alphabet* (1927) is as recognizably Davies as his more important work.

DAYS TOO SHORT

When primroses are out in Spring,
And small, blue violets come between;
When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,
As though escaped from Nature's hand
Ere perfect quite; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps;

When small clouds are so silvery white
Each seems a broken rimmèd moon —
When such things are, this world too soon,
For me, doth wear the veil of Night.

THE MOON

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
Oh, thou fair Moon, so close and bright;
Thy beauty makes me like the child
That cries aloud to own thy light:
The little child that lifts each arm
To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night
With thy white beams across their throats,
Let my deep silence speak for me
More than for them their sweetest notes:
Who worships thee till music fails,
Is greater than thy nightingales.

THE WHITE CASCADE

What happy mortal sees that mountain now,
The white cascade that's shining on its brow?

The white cascade that's both a bird and star,
That has a ten-mile voice and shines so far?

Though I may never leave this land again,
Yet every spring my mind must cross the main

To hear and see that water-bird and star
That on the mountain sings, and shines so far.

CROWNS

Love's touch is soft, and Death
  Is gentle, when he takes
A sleeping child's light breath,
  Before it wakes;
But neither Death nor Love
Moves softer than I move.
Great is my ecstasy,
Till generous I
For common pence have sold
The world my purest gold.
No man that's blind
  Has ears more quick to hear;
No man that's deaf and dumb
  Has eyes more sharp and clear.
No wonder then that kings,
Envying the man who sings,
Aspire to wear his crown
And scorn their own;
No wonder kings aspire
  For crowns not made of gold,
Which — though Time's born a thief —
  Escape his hold.
Two kings have won —
David and Solomon.

A GREETING

Good morning, Life — and all
Things glad and beautiful.
My pockets nothing hold,
But he that owns the gold,

The Sun, is my great friend —
His spending has no end.

Hail to the morning sky,
Which bright clouds measure high;
Hail to you birds whose throats
Would number leaves by notes;
Hail to you shady bowers,
And you green fields of flowers.

Hail to you women fair,
That make a show so rare
In cloth as white as milk —
Be't calico or silk:
Good morning, Life — and all
Things glad and beautiful.

J. M. SYNGE

J. M. Synge, the most brilliant star of the Celtic revival, was born at Rathfarnham, near Dublin, in 1871. As a child in Wicklow, he was already fascinated by the strange idioms and the rhythmic speech he heard there, a native utterance which was his greatest delight and which was to be rich material for his greatest work.

For some time, Synge's career was uncertain. He went to Germany, half intending to become a professional musician. There he studied the theory of music, perfecting himself meanwhile in Gaelic and Hebrew, winning prizes in both of these languages. Yeats found him in France in 1898 and advised him to go to the Aran Islands, to live there as if he were one of the people. "Express a life," said Yeats, "that has never found expression."

The result of this close contact was four of the greatest poetic prose dramas not only of Synge's own generation, but of several generations preceding it. (See Preface.)

In *Riders to the Sea* (1903), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) we have a richness of imagery, a new language startling in its vigor, a wildness and passion that contrast strangely with the suave mysticism and delicate spirituality of his associates in the Irish Theatre.

Synge's *Poems and Translations* (1910), a volume which was not issued until after his death, contains not only his few hard and earthy verses, but also Synge's prose-poems and his famous theory of poetry.

Synge died, just as he was beginning to attain fame, at a private hospital in Dublin, March 24, 1909.

PRELUDE

Still south I went and west and south again,
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities and the sights of men,
Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
The grey and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
In converse with the mountains, moors and fens.

A TRANSLATION FROM PETRARCH

(*He is Jealous of the Heavens and the Earth*)

What a grudge I am bearing the earth that has its arms about her, and is holding that face away from me, where I was finding peace from great sadness.

What a grudge I am bearing the Heavens that are after taking her, and shutting her in with greediness, the Heavens that do push their bolt against so many.

What a grudge I am bearing the blessed saints that have got her sweet company, that I am always seeking; and what a grudge I am bearing against Death, that is standing in her two eyes, and will not call me with a word.

BEG-INNISH

Bring Kateen-beug and Maurya Jude
To dance in Beg-Innish,[1]

---

[1] The accent is on the last syllable.

And when the lads (they're in Dunquin)
Have sold their crabs and fish,
Wave fawny shawls and call them in,
And call the little girls who spin,
And seven weavers from Dunquin,
To dance in Beg-Innish.

I'll play you jigs, and Maurice Kean,
Where nets are laid to dry,
I've silken strings would draw a dance
From girls are lame or shy;
Four strings I've brought from Spain and France
To make your long men skip and prance,
Till stars look out to see the dance
Where nets are laid to dry.

We'll have no priest or peeler in
To dance in Beg-Innish;
But we'll have drink from M'riarty Jim
Rowed round while gannets fish,
A keg with porter to the brim,
That every lad may have his whim,
Till we up sails with M'riarty Jim
And sail from Beg-Innish.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

Eva Gore-Booth, the second daughter of Sir Henry Gore-Booth and the sister of Countess Marcievicz, was born in Sligo, Ireland, in 1871. She first appeared in A. E.'s anthology, *New Songs*, in which so many of the modern Irish poets first "emerged." Her death came suddenly in 1926.

Her initial volume, *Poems* (1898), showed practically no distinction — not even the customary "promise." But *The One and the Many* (1904) and *The Sorrowful Princess* (1907) revealed the gift of the Celtic singer who is half mystic, half minstrel. Primarily philosophic, her verse often turns to lyrics as haunting as the example here reprinted.

THE WAVES OF BREFFNY

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it; and terror on the wind:
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

MOIRA O'NEILL

Moira O'Neill is known chiefly by a remarkable little collection of only twenty-five lyrics, *Songs from the Glens of Antrim* (1900), simple tunes as unaffected as the peasants of whom she sings. *More Songs from the Glens of Antrim* (1921) attempts but often fails to capture the charm of the original gathering. The best of her poetry is dramatic without being theatrical; it is melodious without falling into the tinkle of most "popular" sentimental verse.

A BROKEN SONG

"*Where am I from?*" From the green hills of Erin.
"*Have I no song then?*" My songs are all sung.
"*What o' my love?*" 'Tis alone I am farin'.
Old grows my heart, an' my voice yet is young.

"*If she was tall?*" Like a king's own daughter.
"*If she was fair?*" Like a mornin' o' May.
When she'd come laughin' 'twas the runnin' wather,
When she'd come blushin' 'twas the break o' day.

"*Where did she dwell?*" Where one'st I had my dwellin'.
"*Who loved her best?*" There's no one now will know.
"*Where is she gone?*" Och, why would I be tellin'!
Where she is gone there I can never go.

RALPH HODGSON

Ralph Hodgson was born in Northumberland in 1871 and, with the exception of brief intervals as professional draftsman, has devoted his life to literature. Writing little and publishing less, Hodgson was unknown until he was almost forty, his first book, *The Last Blackbird and Other Lines*, appearing in 1907. In 1913, he went into partnership with Lovat Fraser and Holbrook Jackson, publishing broadsides and chapbooks; many of his most famous poems appearing in the exquisite booklets issued by their press, "The Sign of Flying Fame."

In 1924, Hodgson accepted an invitation to visit Japan as lecturer in English literature, and August of that year found him at Sendai University, about two hundred miles from Tokio.

Hodgson's verses, full of the love of all natural things, a love that goes out to

> "an idle rainbow
> No less than laboring seas,"

were issued in a collected *Poems* which appeared in America in 1918. The longer verses ("The Bull," "The Song of Honour") are powerfully sustained; the short lyrics are as fresh as any poetry ever written in English. It is impossible to question their charm or their permanence.

THE BIRDCATCHER

When flighting time is on, I go
With clap-net and decoy,
A-fowling after goldfinches
And other birds of joy;

I lurk among the thickets of
The Heart where they are bred,
And catch the twittering beauties as
They fly into my Head.

TIME, YOU OLD GYPSY MAN

Time, you old gypsy man,
  Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
  Just for one day?

All things I'll give you
Will you be my guest,
Bells for your jennet
Of silver the best,
Goldsmiths shall beat you
A great golden ring,
Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may.
Time, you old gypsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein —
Only a moment,
And off once again;
Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

AFTER

"How fared you when you mortal were?
What did you see on my peopled star?"
"Oh, well enough," I answered her,
It went for me where mortals are!

"I saw blue flowers and the merlin's flight,
And the rime on the wintry tree;
Blue doves I saw and summer light
On the wings of the cinnamon bee."

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in a vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat:
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

REASON

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirrored on her sea,
Confusing her astronomers,
But O! delighting me.

THE MYSTERY

He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare
The mystery to me,
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
And His own face to see.

JOHN McCRAE

John McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, in 1872. He was graduated in arts in 1894 and in medicine in 1898. He finished his studies at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and returned to Canada, joining the staff of the Medical School of McGill University. He was a lieutenant of artillery in South Africa (1899–1900) and was in charge of the Medical Division of the McGill Canadian General Hospital during the World War. After serving two years, he died of pneumonia, January, 1918, his volume *In Flanders Fields* (1919) appearing posthumously.

Few who read the title-poem of his book, possibly the most widely-read poem produced by the war, realize that it is a perfect rondeau, one of the loveliest (and strictest) of the French forms.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

WALTER DE LA MARE

The author of some of the most haunting lyrics in contemporary poetry, Walter (John) De la Mare, was born in 1873. Although he did not begin to bring out his work in book form until he was over thirty, he is, as Harold Williams has written, "the singer of a young and romantic world, a singer even for children, understanding and perceiving as a child." De la Mare paints simple scenes of miniature loveliness; he uses thin-spun fragments of fairy-like delicacy and achieves a grace that is remarkable in its universality.

De la Mare is an astonishing joiner of words; in *Peacock Pie* (1913) he surprises us again and again by transforming what began as a child's nonsense-rhyme into a suddenly thrilling snatch of music. These magical poems read like lyrics of William Shakespeare rendered by Mother Goose. The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colors, of catching the commonplace off its guard, is the first of De la Mare's two magics.

This poet's second gift is his sense of the supernatural, of the fantastic other-world that lies on the edges of our consciousness. *The Listeners* (1912) is a book that, like all the best of De la Mare, is full of half-heard whispers; moonlight and mystery seem soaked in the lines and a cool wind from Nowhere blows over them. That most magical of modern verses, "The Listeners," is an example. In this poem there is an uncanny splendor. What we have here is the effect, the thrill, the overtones of a ghost story rather than the narrative itself — the half-told adventure of some new Childe Roland heroically challenging a heedless universe.

Some of his earlier poems and stories appeared originally under the pseudonym, Walter Ramal; his remarkable prose, *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921), is an addition to the permanent literature of great novels. *Collected Poems 1901–1918* was followed by *Motley* in 1919 and *The Veil* in 1921.

THE LISTENERS

“ Is there anybody there? ” said the Traveller,
  Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
  Of the forest’s ferny floor.
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
  Above the Traveller’s head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
  “ Is there anybody there? ” he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
  No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
  Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
  That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
  To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
  That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
  By the lonely Traveller’s call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
  Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
  ’Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
  Louder, and lifted his head: —
“ Tell them I came, and no one answered,
  That I kept my word,” he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
  Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
  From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
  And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
  When the plunging hoofs were gone.

OLD SUSAN

When Susan's work was done, she'd sit
With one fat guttering candle lit,
And window opened wide to win
The sweet night air to enter in;
There, with a thumb to keep her place,
She'd read, with stern and wrinkled face.
Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro,
While wagged the guttering candle flame
In the wind that through the window came.

And sometimes in the silence she
Would mumble a sentence audibly,
Or shake her head as if to say,
" You silly souls, to act this way! "
And never a sound from night I'd hear,
Unless some far-off cock crowed clear;
Or her old shuffling thumb should turn
Another page; and rapt and stern,
Through her great glasses bent on me
She'd glance into reality;
And shake her round old silvery head,
With — " You! — I thought you was in bed! " —
Only to tilt her book again,
And rooted in Romance remain.

SILVER

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;

From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.

But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;
However rare — rare it be;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

CHICKEN

Clapping her platter stood plump Bess,
And all across the green
Came scampering in, on wing and claw
Chicken fat and lean: —
Dorking, Spaniard, Cochin China,
Bantams sleek and small,
Like feathers blown in a great wind,
They came at Bessie's call.

THERE BLOOMS NO BUD IN MAY

There blooms no bud in May
Can for its white compare
With snow at break of day,
On fields forlorn and bare.

For shadow it hath rose,
Azure, and amethyst;
And every air that blows
Dies out in beauteous mist.

It hangs the frozen bough
With flowers on which the night
Wheeling her darkness through
Scatters a starry light.

Fearful of its pale glare
In flocks the starlings rise;
Slide through the frosty air,
And perch with plaintive cries.

Only the inky rook,
Hunched cold in ruffled wings,
Its snowy nest forsook,
Caws of unnumbered Springs.

G. K. CHESTERTON

The brilliant journalist, novelist, essayist, publicist and lyricist, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, was born at Campden Hill, Kensington, in 1874, and began his literary life by reviewing books on art for various magazines. He is best known as a writer of flashing, paradoxical essays on anything and everything, like *Tremendous Trifles* (1909), *Varied Types* (1905), and *All Things Considered* (1910). But he is also a stimulating critic; a keen appraiser, as in his volume *Heretics* (1905) and his analytical studies of Robert Browning, Charles Dickens and George Bernard Shaw; a writer of strange and grotesque romances like *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908) and *The Flying Inn* (1914); author of several books of fantastic short stories, ranging from the wildly whimsical narratives in *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905) to that amazing sequence *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911) — which is a series of religious detective stories!

Besides being the creator of all of these, Chesterton finds time to be a prolific if sometimes too acrobatic newspaperman; a lay preacher in disguise (witness *Orthodoxy* [1908], *What's Wrong with the World?*

[1910]); a pamphleteer, and a poet. His first volume of verse, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems* (1900), a collection of quaintly-flavored and affirmative verses, was followed by *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911). Subsequent volumes have established his thoroughly English mixture of sincerity and optimism. The rollicking *Wine, Water and Song* (1915) and *The Ballad of St. Barbara* (1922) have a humor that is "at home in the streets and familiar among the stars."

"Lepanto," from *Poems* (1915), anticipating the clanging verses of Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo," is one of the finest of modern chants. It is thrilling to hear how the syllables beat as though on brass; to feel how, in one's pulses, the armies sing, the feet tramp, the drums snarl, and the tides of marching crusaders roll out of lines like:

"Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war;
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold;
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he
comes. . . ."

Chesterton, the prose-paradoxer, is a delightful product of a sceptical age. But it is Chesterton the poet who is more likely to outlive it.

LEPANTO[1]

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men
feared,
It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard;
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips;
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the
Cross.

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[1] From *Poems* by G. K. Chesterton. Copyright by Dodd, Mead and Company, and reprinted by permission of the publishers.

The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred,
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half attainted stall,
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung,
That once went singing southward when all the world was young.
In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.

Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes.
Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.
Love-light of Spain — hurrah!
Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,
(Don John of Austria is going to the war.)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees;

And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to
bring
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.
Giants and the Genii,
Multiplex of wing and eye,
Whose strong obedience broke the sky
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the
morn,
From the temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes
in scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the
sea
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be.
On them the sea-valves cluster and the grey sea-forests curl.
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the
ground, —
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.
And he saith, " Break up the mountains where the hermit-
folk can hide,
And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,
And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,
For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.
We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,
Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done.
But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains, and I
know
The voice that shook our palaces — four hundred years ago:
It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate;
It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate!
It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager
worth,
Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the
earth."
For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)

Sudden and still — hurrah!
Bolt from Iberia!
Don John of Austria
Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north
(*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)
Where the grey seas glitter and the sharp tides shift
And the sea-folk labour and the red sails lift.
He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;
The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone;
The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes,
And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,
And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,
And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom,
And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee, —
But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.
Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse
Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet of his lips,
Trumpet that sayeth *ha!*
Domino gloria!
Don John of Austria
Is shouting to the ships.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.*)
The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,
The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle dark,
They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark;

And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,
And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs,
Christian captives sick and sunless, all a labouring race repines
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.
They are lost like slaves that swat, and in the skies of morning hung
The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon.
And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell
Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell,
And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign —
(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!*)
Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labour under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.
Vivat Hispania!
Domino Gloria!
Don John of Austria
Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath
(*Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.*)
And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight for ever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade. . . .
(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*)

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked
  And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
  Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
  And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
  On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
  Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
  I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
  One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
  And palms before my feet.

JOHN MASEFIELD

John Masefield was born June 1, 1878, in Ledbury, Hertfordshire. He was the son of a lawyer, but, being of a restless disposition, he took to the sea at an early age and became a wanderer for several years. At one time (in 1895, to be exact) he worked for a few months as a sort of third assistant barkeeper and dish-washer in Luke O'Connor's saloon, the Columbia Hotel, in New York City. The place is still there on the corner of Sixth and Greenwich Avenues.

The results of his wanderings showed in his early works, *Salt-Water Ballads* (1902), *Ballads* (1903), frank and often crude poems of sailors written in their own dialect, and *A Mainsail Haul* (1905), a collection of short nautical stories.

It was not until he published *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911) that he became famous. Followed quickly by those remarkable long narrative poems, *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), and *The Daffodil Fields* (1913), there is in all of these that peculiar blend of physical exulting and spiritual exaltation that is so striking, and so typical of Masefield. Their very rudeness is lifted to a plane of religious intensity. (See Preface.)

The war, in which Masefield served with the Red Cross in France and on the Gallipoli peninsula (of which campaign he wrote a study for the government), softened his style; *Good Friday and Other Poems* (1916) is as restrained and dignified a collection as that of any of his contemporaries. *Reynard the Fox* (1919) is the best of his new manner with a return of the old vivacity.

Masefield has also written several novels, of which *Multitude and Solitude* (1909) and *Sard Harker* (1924) are the most outstanding; half a dozen plays, ranging from the classical solemnity of *Pompey the Great* to the hot and racy *Tragedy of Nan;* and one of the freshest, most creative critiques of *Shakespeare* (1911) in the last generation. A comprehensive *Collected Poems* appeared in 1924.

A CONSECRATION

Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged charioteers
Riding triumphantly laurelled to lap the fat of the years, —
Rather the scorned — the rejected — the men hemmed in with the spears;

The men of the tattered battalion which fights till it dies,
Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and the cries.
The men with the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes.

Not the be-medalled Commander, beloved of the throne,
Riding cock-horse to parade when the bugles are blown,
But the lads who carried the koppie and cannot be known.

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load.

The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with the clout,
The chantyman bent at the halliards putting a tune to the shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired look-out.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth; —
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the
earth!

Theirs be the music, the colour, the glory, the gold;
Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mould.
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and
the cold —
Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tales be told.
AMEN.

SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running
tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life.
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like
a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's
over.

ROUNDING THE HORN

(*From "Dauber"*) [1]

Then came the cry of " Call all hands on deck! "
The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck,
And crumples steel and smites the strong man dumb.
Down clattered flying kites and staysails; some
Sang out in quick, high calls: the fair-leads skirled,
And from the south-west came the end of the world . . .

" Lay out! " the Bosun yelled. The Dauber laid
Out on the yard, gripping the yard, and feeling
Sick at the mighty space of air displayed
Below his feet, where mewing birds were wheeling.
A giddy fear was on him; he was reeling.
He bit his lip half through, clutching the jack.
A cold sweat glued the shirt upon his back.

The yard was shaking, for a brace was loose.
He felt that he would fall; he clutched, he bent,
Clammy with natural terror to the shoes
While idiotic promptings came and went.
Snow fluttered on a wind-flaw and was spent;
He saw the water darken. Someone yelled,
" Frap it; don't stay to furl! Hold on! " He held.

Darkness came down — half darkness — in a whirl;
The sky went out, the waters disappeared.
He felt a shocking pressure of blowing hurl
The ship upon her side. The darkness speared
At her with wind; she staggered, she careered;
Then down she lay. The Dauber felt her go,
He saw her yard tilt downwards. Then the snow

Whirled all about — dense, multitudinous, cold —
Mixed with the wind's one devilish thrust and shriek,

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[1] From *The Story of a Round-House* by John Masefield. Copyright, 1913, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

Which whiffled out men's tears, defeated, took hold,
Flattening the flying drift against the cheek.
The yards buckled and bent, man could not speak.
The ship lay on her broadside; the wind's sound
Had devilish malice at having got her downed.

. . . .

How long the gale had blown he could not tell,
Only the world had changed, his life had died.
A moment now was everlasting hell.
Nature an onslaught from the weather side,
A withering rush of death, a frost that cried,
Shrieked, till he withered at the heart; a hail
Plastered his oilskins with an icy mail. . . .

" Up! " yelled the Bosun; " up and clear the wreck! "
The Dauber followed where he led; below
He caught one giddy glimpsing of the deck
Filled with white water, as though heaped with snow.
He saw the streamers of the rigging blow
Straight out like pennons from the splintered mast,
Then, all sense dimmed, all was an icy blast.

Roaring from nether hell and filled with ice,
Roaring and crashing on the jerking stage,
An utter bridle given to utter vice,
Limitless power mad with endless rage
Withering the soul; a minute seemed an age.
He clutched and hacked at ropes, at rags of sail,
Thinking that comfort was a fairy tale,

Told long ago — long, long ago — long since
Heard of in other lives — imagined, dreamed —
There where the basest beggar was a prince.
To him in torment where the tempest screamed,
Comfort and warmth and ease no longer seemed
Things that a man could know; soul, body, brain,
Knew nothing but the wind, the cold, the pain.

Born at Hexam in 1878, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson has published almost a dozen books of verse — the first four or five (see Preface) being imitative in manner and sentimentally romantic in tone. With *The Stonefolds* (1907) and *Daily Bread* (1910), Gibson executed a complete right-about-face and, with dramatic brevity, wrote a series of poems mirroring the dreams, pursuits and fears of common humanity. *Fires* (1912) marks an advance in technique and power. And though in *Livelihood* (1917) Gibson seems to be theatricalizing and merely exploiting his working-people, his later lyrics and narratives frequently recapture the veracity.

THE STONE[1]

" And will you cut a stone for him,
To set above his head?
And will you cut a stone for him —
A stone for him? " she said.

Three days before, a splintered rock
Had struck her lover dead —
Had struck him in the quarry dead,
Where, careless of the warning call,
He loitered, while the shot was fired —
A lively stripling, brave and tall,
And sure of all his heart desired . . .
A flash, a shock,
A rumbling fall . . .
And, broken 'neath the broken rock,
A lifeless heap, with face of clay;
And still as any stone he lay,
With eyes that saw the end of all.

I went to break the news to her;
And I could hear my own heart beat
With dread of what my lips might say.
But some poor fool had sped before;

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[1] From *Fires* by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Copyright, 1912, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

And flinging wide her father's door,
Had blurted out the news to her,
Had struck her lover dead for her,
Had struck the girl's heart dead in her,
Had struck life, lifeless, at a word,
And dropped it at her feet:
Then hurried on his witless way,
Scarce knowing she had heard.

And when I came, she stood, alone
A woman, turned to stone:
And, though no word at all she said,
I knew that all was known.

Because her heart was dead,
She did not sigh nor moan,
His mother wept:
She could not weep.
Her lover slept:
She could not sleep.
Three days, three nights,
She did not stir:
Three days, three nights,
Were one to her,
Who never closed her eyes
From sunset to sunrise,
From dawn to evenfall:
Her tearless, staring eyes,
That seeing naught, saw all.

The fourth night when I came from work,
I found her at my door.
" And will you cut a stone for him? "
She said and spoke no more:
But followed me, as I went in,
And sank upon a chair;
And fixed her grey eyes on my face,
With still, unseeing stare.

And, as she waited patiently,
I could not bear to feel
Those still, grey eyes that followed me,
Those eyes that plucked the heart from me,
Those eyes that sucked the breath from me
And curdled the warm blood in me,
Those eyes that cut me to the bone,
And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

And so I rose, and sought a stone;
And cut it, smooth and square:
And, as I worked, she sat and watched,
Beside me, in her chair.
Night after night, by candlelight,
I cut her lover's name:
Night after night, so still and white,
And like a ghost she came;
And sat beside me in her chair;
And watched with eyes aflame.

She eyed each stroke;
And hardly stirred:
She never spoke
A single word:
And not a sound or murmur broke
The quiet, save the mallet-stroke.
With still eyes ever on my hands,
With eyes that seemed to burn my hands,
My wincing, overwearied hands,
She watched, with bloodless lips apart,
And silent, indrawn breath:
And every stroke my chisel cut,
Death cut still deeper in her heart:
The two of us were chiseling,
Together, I and death.

And when at length the job was done,
And I had laid the mallet by,

As if, at last, her peace were won,
She breathed his name; and, with a sigh,
Passed slowly through the open door:
And never crossed my threshold more.

Next night I laboured late, alone,
To cut her name upon the stone.

SIGHT[1]

By the lamplit stall I loitered, feasting my eyes
On colours ripe and rich for the heart's desire —
Tomatoes, redder than Krakatoa's fire,
Oranges like old sunsets over Tyre,
And apples golden-green as the glades of Paradise.

And as I lingered, lost in divine delight,
My heart thanked God for the goodly gift of sight
And all youth's lively senses keen and quick . . .
When suddenly, behind me in the night,
I heard the tapping of a blind man's stick.

A. E. COPPARD

A. E. Coppard was born January 4, 1878, at Folkestone, Kent, and has lived all his life in close contact with the soil of which he writes so magically. Little known until 1921, he immediately became a significant figure in literature with the publication of *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, a collection of exquisite short stories. The prose volumes which followed (and there have been five up to the present) have increased his following among lovers of delicately written and poignant prose.

As a writer of poetry, Coppard has less of a reputation. But *Hips and Haws* (1922) and the verses which he has published in *Pelagea* (1927) bid fair to make him almost as well known in this medium.

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[1] From *Borderlands and Thoroughfares* by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Copyright, 1915, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

WINTER FIELD

Sorrow on the acres,
  Wind in the thorn,
And an old man ploughing
  Through the frosty morn.

A flock of the dark birds,
  Rooks and their wives,
Follow the plough team
  The old man drives;

And troops of starlings,
  A-tittle-tat and prim,
Follow the rooks
  That follow him.

EDWARD THOMAS

Edward Thomas, one of the little-known but most individual of modern English poets, was born in 1878. For many years before he turned to verse, Thomas had a large following as a critic and author of travel-books, biographies, pot-boilers. It needed something foreign to stir and animate what was native in him. So when Robert Frost, the New England poet, went abroad in 1912 for two years and became an intimate of Thomas's, the English critic began to write poetry. Loving, like Frost, the *minutiæ* of existence, the quaint and casual turn of ordinary life, he caught the magic of the English countryside in its unpoeticized quietude. It is not disillusion, it is rather an absence of illusion. *Poems* (1917), dedicated to Robert Frost, is full of Thomas's fidelity to little things, things as unglorified as the unfreezing of the "rock-like mud," a child's path, a list of quaint-sounding villages, birds' nests uncovered by the autumn wind, dusty nettles. His lines glow with a deep reverence for the soil.

Last Poems (published posthumously in 1919) is full of evidences that Thomas knew the life and landscapes of the country "from the inside." As Henry Newbolt has written, "He did not so much inhabit England as haunt it."

Thomas was killed at Arras, at an observatory outpost, on Easter Monday, 1917.

IF I SHOULD EVER BY CHANCE

If I should ever by chance grow rich
I'll buy Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrgo, and Lapwater,
And let them all to my elder daughter.
The rent I shall ask of her will be only
Each year's first violets, white and lonely,
The first primroses and orchises —
She must find them before I do, that is.
But if she finds a blossom on furze
Without rent they shall all for ever be hers,
Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrgo, and Lapwater, —
I shall give them all to my elder daughter.

TALL NETTLES

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
As well as any bloom upon a flower
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

COCK-CROW

Out of the wood of thoughts that grows by night
To be cut down by the sharp axe of light, —
Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
Cleaving the darkness with a silver blow:
And bright before my eyes twin trumpeters stand,
Heralds of splendour, one at either hand,
Each facing each as in a coat of arms: —
The milkers lace their boots up at the farms.

James Starkey was born in Dublin in 1879. Writing under the pseudonym of Seumas O'Sullivan, he contributed a great variety of prose and verse to various Irish papers. His reputation as a poet began with his appearance in *New Songs*, edited by George Russell (A. E.). Later, he published *The Twilight People* (1905), *The Earth Lover* (1909), and *Poems* (1912).

PRAISE

Dear, they are praising your beauty,
The grass and the sky:
The sky in a silence of wonder,
The grass in a sigh.

I too would sing for your praising,
Dearest, had I
Speech as the whispering grass,
Or the silent sky.

These have an art for the praising
Beauty so high.
Sweet, you are praised in a silence,
Sung in a sigh.

CHARLOTTE MEW

One of the most amazing figures in modern poetry is the reticent Charlotte Mew, of whom, apart from the fact she has lived in London for years, little is known by the world. She has published only one book, yet that one small collection contains some of the finest poetry of our times.

In 1916, *The Farmer's Bride*, a paper-covered pamphlet, appeared in England. It contained just seventeen poems, the pruned fruit of many years. *Saturday Market* (1921) is the American edition of this volume with eleven poems added. Had Miss Mew printed nothing but the original booklet, it would have been sufficient to rank her among the most distinctive and intense of living poets. Hers is the distillation, the essence of emotion, rather than the stirring up of passions. Her most memorable work is in dramatic projections and poignant monologues (unfortunately too long to quote) like "The Changeling," with its fantastic pathos, and that powerful meditation, "Madeleine in Church." But lyrics as swift as "Sea Love" or as slowly hymn-like as "Beside the Bed" are equally sure of their place in English literature.

BESIDE THE BED

Someone has shut the shining eyes, straightened and folded
The wandering hands quietly covering the unquiet breast:
So, smoothed and silenced you lie, like a child, not again to be questioned or scolded;
But, for you, not one of us believes that this is rest.

Not so to close the windows down can cloud and deaden
The blue beyond: or to screen the wavering flame subdue its breath:
Why, if I lay my cheek to your cheek, your grey lips, like dawn, would quiver and redden,
Breaking into the old, odd smile at this fraud of death.

Because all night you have not turned to us or spoken,
It is time for you to wake; your dreams were never very deep:
I. for one, have seen the thin, bright, twisted threads of them dimmed suddenly and broken.
This is only a most piteous pretense of sleep!

SEA LOVE

Tide be runnin' the great world over:
'Twas only last June month I mind that we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.

Heer's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,
Wi' the moon's old glim on the grey, wet sand;
An' him no more to me nor me to him
Than the wind goin' over my hand.

Harold Monro, who describes himself as "author, publisher, editor and book-seller," was born in Brussels in 1879. Monro founded The Poetry Bookshop in London in 1912 and his quarterly *Poetry and Drama* (discontinued during the war and revived in 1919 as *The Chapbook*, a monthly) was, in a sense, the organ of the younger men.

Monro's poetry is impelled by a peculiar mysticism, a mysticism that depicts the play between the worlds of reality and fantasy. His *Strange Meetings* (1917) and *Children of Love* (1915) present, with an originality rare among Monro's contemporaries, the relation of man not only to the earth he rose from, but to the inanimate things he moves among. Even the most whimsical of this poet's concepts have an emotional intensity beneath their skilful rhythms.

Real Property (1922) represents a still further advance. Although Monro has not lost his whimsical appraisal of "still life," the note is graver, the implications larger. "The passing event and its effect on the mind," as he himself has said, is the propelling power of his work.

EVERY THING

Since man has been articulate,
Mechanical, improvidently wise,
(Servant of Fate),
He has not understood the little cries
And foreign conversations of the small
Delightful creatures that have followed him
Not far behind;
Has failed to hear the sympathetic call
Of Crockery and Cutlery, those kind
Reposeful Teraphim
Of his domestic happiness; the Stool
He sat on, or the Door he entered through:
He has not thanked them, overbearing fool!
What is he coming to?

But you should listen to the talk of these.
Honest they are, and patient they have kept;
Served him without his Thank you or his Please . . .
I often heard
The gentle Bed, a sigh between each word,
Murmuring, before I slept.

The Candle, as I blew it, cried aloud,
Then bowed.
And in a smoky argument
Into the darkness went.

The Kettle puffed a tentacle of breath: —
" Pooh! I have boiled his water, I don't know
Why; and he always says I boil too slow.
He never calls me ' Sukie, dear,' and oh,
I wonder why I squander my desire
Sitting submissive on his kitchen fire."

Now the old Copper Basin suddenly
Rattled and tumbled from the shelf,
Bumping and crying: " I can fall by myself;
Without a woman's hand
To patronize and coax and flatter me,
I understand
The lean and poise of gravitable land."
It gave a raucous and tumultuous shout,
Twisted itself convulsively about,
Rested upon the floor, and, while I stare,
It stares and grins at me.
The old impetuous Gas above my head
Begins irascibly to flare and fret,
Wheezing into its epileptic jet,
Reminding me I ought to go to bed.

The Rafters creak; an Empty-Cupboard door
Swings open; now a wild Plank of the floor
Breaks from its joist, and leaps behind my foot.
Down from the chimney, half a pound of Soot
Tumbles and lies, and shakes itself again.
The Putty cracks against the window-pane.
A piece of Paper in the basket shoves
Another piece, and toward the bottom moves.
My independent Pencil, while I write,
Breaks at the point: the ruminating Clock
Stirs all its body and begins to rock,

Warning the waiting presence of the Night,
Strikes the dead hour, and tumbles to the plain
Ticking of ordinary work again.

You do well to remind me, and I praise
Your strangely individual foreign ways.
You call me from myself to recognize
Companionship in your unselfish eyes.
I want your dear acquaintances, although
I pass you arrogantly over, throw
Your lovely sounds, and squander them along
My busy days. I'll do you no more wrong.

Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat.
You, my well trampled Boots, and you, my Hat,
Remain my friends: I feel, though I don't speak,
Your touch grow kindlier from week to week.
It well becomes our mutual happiness
To go toward the same end more or less.
There is not much dissimilarity,
Not much to choose, I know it well, in fine,
Between the purposes of you and me,
And your eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine.

THE GUEST

(*A Christmas Prayer*)

Tall, cool and gentle, you are here
To turn the water into wine.
Now, at the ebbing of the year,
Be you the sun we need to shine.

It is the birthday of your word;
And we are gathered. Will you come?
Let not your spirit be a sword,
O, luminous delightful lord.

Alfred Noyes was born at Staffordshire, September 16, 1880, and educated at Exeter College, Oxford. He is one of the few contemporary poets who have been fortunate enough to write a kind of poetry that is not only saleable but popular with many classes of people.

His first book, *The Loom of Years* (1902), was published when he was only twenty-two years old, and *Poems* (1904) intensified the promise of his first publication. Unfortunately, Noyes has not developed his gifts as deeply as his admirers have hoped. His poetry, extremely straightforward and rhythmical, has often degenerated into cheap and repetitious sentimentalities; it has recently attempted to express profundities far beyond Noyes's power.

What is most appealing about his best verse is its ease and heartiness; this singer's gift lies in the almost personal bond established between the poet and his public. People have so good a time reading his vivacious lines because Noyes had so good a time writing them. Noyes's own gusto quickened glees and catches like *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907), the lusty choruses in *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), and the inspired nonsense of *The Forest of Wild Thyme* (1905).

His eight volumes were assembled in 1913 and published in two books of *Collected Poems*. Although many of these nine hundred pages are doomed to an early death — are, in fact, already extinct — Noyes will remain a poet pleasant to read because of "Sherwood," the lilt of "The Barrel-Organ," the galloping "The Highwayman" and a handful of other ballads.

THE BARREL-ORGAN

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
  And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
  That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
  In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
  And trolling out a fond familiar tune,

And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colours it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into — a dance! —

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
  At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
  And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
  At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
  You'll hear the rest, without a doubt, all chorusing for London: —

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
  Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
  Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street.
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
  In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream
  Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-coloured stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem

To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
  And pulses with the sunset-glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and — they're each of them alone
  In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a labourer that listens to the voices of the dead
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and — there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
  Through the land where the dead dreams go . . .

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
  In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
  What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
  Tripping on their way?
All around my gala hat
  I wear a wreath of roses

(A long and lonely year it is
  I've waited for the May!)
If any one should ask you,
  The reason why I wear it is —
My own love, my true love is coming
    home today.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
  (*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;
  While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady
  (*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
  And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
  As it dies into the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
  That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
  In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
  The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
  Through all its joy and pain:
Dissects the common carnival
  Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
  The wheeling song forgets.

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's wonderland,
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

EPILOGUE

(*From "The Flower of Old Japan"*)

Carol, every violet has
Heaven for a looking-glass!

Every little valley lies
Under many-clouded skies;
Every little cottage stands
Girt about with boundless lands.
Every little glimmering pond
Claims the mighty shores beyond —
Shores no seaman ever hailed,
Seas no ship has ever sailed.

All the shores when day is done
Fade into the setting sun,
So the story tries to teach
More than can be told in speech.

Beauty is a fading flower,
Truth is but a wizard's tower,
Where a solemn death-bell tolls,
And a forest round it rolls.

We have come by curious ways
To the light that holds the days;
We have sought in haunts of fear
For that all-enfolding sphere:
And lo! it was not far, but near.
We have found, O foolish-fond,
The shore that has no shore beyond.

Deep in every heart it lies
With its untranscended skies;
For what heaven should bend above
Hearts that own the heaven of love?
Carol, Carol, we have come
Back to heaven, back to home.

PADRAIC COLUM

Padraic Colum was born at Longford, Ireland (in the same county as Oliver Goldsmith), December 8, 1881, and was educated at the local schools. At twenty he was a member of a group that created the Irish National Theatre, afterwards called The Abbey Theatre. He has lived in America since 1914.

Colum began as a dramatist with *Broken Soil* (1904), *The Land* (1905), *Thomas Muskerry* (1910), and this early dramatic influence has colored much of his work, his best poetry being in the form of dramatic lyrics. *Wild Earth*, his most notable collection of verse, first appeared in 1909, and an amplified edition of it was published in America in 1916. His *Dramatic Poems* appeared in 1922, *Creatures*, beautifully illustrated, in 1927.

Besides his other gifts, Colum is eminently successful as an adapter, sensitive as a critic, and deservedly popular as a teller of tales for children.

THE PLOUGHER

Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage, earth broken;
Beside him two horses — a plough!

Earth savage, earth broken, the brutes, the dawn man there in the sunset,
And the Plough that is twin to the Sword, that is founder of cities!

"Brute-tamer, plough-maker, earth-breaker! Can'st hear? There are ages between us.
"Is it praying you are as you stand there alone in the sunset?

"Surely our sky-born gods can be naught to you, earth child and earth master?
"Surely your thoughts are of Pan, or of Wotan, or Dana? [1]
"Yet, why give thought to the gods? Has Pan led your brutes where they stumble?
"Has Dana numbed pain of the child-bed, or Wotan put hands to your plough?

"What matter your foolish reply! O, man, standing lone and bowed earthward,
"Your task is a day near its close. Give thanks to the night-giving God."

. . . .

Slowly the darkness falls, the broken lands blend with the savage;
The brute-tamer stands by the brutes, a head's breadth only above them.

A head's breadth? Ay, but therein is hell's depth, and the height up to heaven,
And the thrones of the gods and their halls, their chariots, purples, and splendors.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

Joseph Campbell was born in Belfast in 1881, and is not only a poet but an artist; he made all the illustrations for *The Rushlight* (1906), a volume of his own poems. Writing under the Gaelic form of his name, he has published half a dozen books of verse, the most striking of which is *The Mountainy Singer*, first published in Dublin in 1909.

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
  In a holy place,
So is the beauty
  Of an aged face.

---

[1] Dana is an Irish mythological deity.

As the spent radiance
   Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
   With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
   And her thoughts as still
As the waters
   Under a ruined mill.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Lascelles Abercrombie was born in 1881 in a small village near Manchester. He was educated at Malcolm College and Manchester University. Like Masefield, he gained his reputation rapidly. Totally unknown until 1909, upon the publication of *Interludes and Poems* he was recognized as one of the greatest metaphysical poets of his period. *Emblems of Love* (1912), the ripest collection of his blank verse dialogues, justified the enthusiasm of his admirers.

Many of Abercrombie's poems, the best of which are too long to quote, are founded on scriptural themes, but it is the undercurrent rather than the surface of his verse which moves with a strong religious conviction. Abercrombie's images are daring and brilliant; his lines, sometimes too closely packed, glow with an intensity that is warmly spiritual and fervently human. As a dramatist, Abercrombie has achieved a series of undoubted though scarcely popular successes with *Deborah* (1914), *Four Short Plays* (1921) and *Phoenix* (1923), brilliantly written though not eminently actable pieces.

WOMAN'S BEAUTY

(*From "Vashti"*)

What thing shall be held up to woman's beauty?
Where are the bounds of it? Yea, what is all
The world, but an awning scaffolded amid
The waste perilous Eternity, to lodge
This Heaven-wander'd princess, woman's beauty?
The East and West kneel down to thee, the North
And South; and all for thee their shoulders bear

The load of fourfold space. As yellow morn
Runs on the slippery waves of the spread sea,
Thy feet are on the griefs and joys of men
That sheen to be thy causey. Out of tears
Indeed, and blitheness, murder and lust and love,
Whatever has been passionate in clay,
Thy flesh was tempered. Behold in thy body
The yearnings of all men measured and told,
Insatiate endless agonies of desire
Given thy flesh, the meaning of thy shape!
What beauty is there, but thou makest it?
How is earth good to look on, woods and fields,
The season's garden, and the courageous hills,
All this green raft of earth moored in the seas?
The manner of the sun to ride the air,
The stars God has imagined for the night?
What's this behind them, that we cannot near,
Secret still on the point of being blabbed,
The ghost in the world that flies from being named?
Where do they get their beauty from, all these?
They do but glaze a lantern lit for man,
And woman's beauty is the flame therein.

JAMES STEPHENS

This unique personality was born in Dublin in February, 1882. Stephens was discovered in an office and saved from clerical slavery by George Russell (A. E.). Always a poet, Stephens's most poetic moments are in his highly-colored prose. And yet, although the finest of his novels, *The Crock of Gold* (1912), contains more wild phantasy and quaint imagery than all his volumes of verse, his *Insurrections* (1909) and *The Hill of Vision* (1912) reveal a rebellious spirit that is at once hotly ironic and coolly whimsical. The chief fault of his verse (for his prose is free from this defect) is his fondness for making his simple people ultra-poetic, so that his peasants, instead of bringing us close to their soil, seem utterly removed from actual life.

Stephens's outstanding characteristic is his delightful blend of incongruities — he combines in his verse the grotesque, the buoyant and the profound. *A Poetry Recital* appeared in 1925, his *Collected Poems* in 1926.

THE SHELL

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well,
And straightway like a bell
Came low and clear
The slow, sad murmur of the distant seas,
Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Wind-swept and desolate.
It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight
Since time began
Of any human quality or stir
Save what the dreary winds and waves incur.
And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles rolling round,
For ever rolling with a hollow sound.
And bubbling sea-weeds as the waters go,
Swish to and fro
Their long, cold tentacles of slimy grey.
There was no day,
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight
To wonder at the moon:
Was twilight only and the frightened croon,
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind
And waves that journeyed blind —
And then I loosed my ear. . . . O, it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I saw God. Do you doubt it?
   Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and

He looked upon the World and all about it:
I saw him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
His look was all dissatisfied.
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
" That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand —
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth. Then I said, " Stay,
You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;
And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, " Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And stayed His hand.

JOHN FREEMAN

John Freeman, born in 1882 in London, has published several volumes of pleasantly descriptive verse. His first volume appeared in 1909; since then, his two most distinctive books are *Stone Trees* (1916) and *Memories of Childhood* (1919).

A collected edition of the poems from the previous volumes was published in 1920 under the title *Poems New and Old*. In the same year, Freeman was awarded the Hawthornden prize. Although he has written a great quantity of love lyrics, Freeman's landscapes are more distinctive than his objective work; he is happiest in purely atmospheric pieces.

STONE TREES

Last night a sword-light in the sky
Flashed a swift terror on the dark.
In that sharp light the fields did lie
Naked and stone-like; each tree stood

Like a tranced woman, bound and stark.
        Far off the wood
With darkness ridged the riven dark.

And cows astonished stared with fear,
And sheep crept to the knees of cows,
And conies to their burrows slid,
And rooks were still in rigid boughs,
And all things else were still or hid.
        From all the wood
Came but the owl's hoot, ghostly, clear.

In that cold trance the earth was held
It seemed an age, or time was nought.
Sure never from that stone-like field
Sprang golden corn, nor from those chill
Grey granite trees was music wrought.
        In all the wood
Even the tall poplar hung stone still.

It seemed an age, or time was none . . .
Slowly the earth heaved out of sleep
And shivered, and the trees of stone
Bent and sighed in the gusty wind,
And rain swept as birds flocking sweep.
        Far off the wood
Rolled the slow thunders on the wind.

From all the wood came no brave bird,
No song broke through the close-fall'n night,
Nor any sound from cowering herd:
Only a dog's long lonely howl
When from the window poured pale light.
        And from the wood
The hoot came ghostly of the owl.

Primarily a poetic dramatist, John Drinkwater, born in 1882, is best known as the author of *Abraham Lincoln — A Play* (1919), founded on Lord Charnwood's analytical biography. He has published several volumes of poems, most of them meditative in mood.

The best of his verses have been collected in *Poems*, 1908–19, and the two here reprinted are used by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers. *Seeds of Time* (1921) is a lesser collection, too full of rhetorical generalities to say anything specific.

RECIPROCITY

I do not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude;
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

A TOWN WINDOW

Beyond my window in the night
  Is but a drab inglorious street,
Yet there the frost and clean starlight
  As over Warwick woods are sweet.

Under the grey drift of the town
  The crocus works among the mould
As eagerly as those that crown
  The Warwick spring in flame and gold.

And when the tramway down the hill
  Across the cobbles moans and rings,
There is about my window-sill
  The tumult of a thousand wings.

John Collings Squire was born April 2, 1883, at Plymouth, of Devonian ancestry. He was educated at Blundell's and Cambridge University, and became known first as a remarkably adroit parodist. His *Imaginary Speeches* (1912) and *Tricks of the Trade* (1917) are amusing parodies and, what is more, excellent criticism. He edited *The New Statesman* for a while and founded *The London Mercury* (a monthly of which he is editor) in November, 1919. Under the pseudonym "Solomon Eagle" he wrote a page of literary criticism every week for six years, many of these papers being collected in his volume, *Books in General* (1919).

His original poetry is intellectual but simple, sometimes metaphysical and always interesting technically in its variable rhythms. A collection of his best verse up to 1919 was published under the title, *Poems: First Series*. Another volume, *Poems: Second Series*, appeared during Squire's visit to America in the fall of 1921. His *Collected Parodies* was published in 1923.

A HOUSE

Now very quietly, and rather mournfully,
In clouds of hyacinth the sun retires,
And all the stubble-fields that were so warm to him
Keep but in memory their borrowed fires.

And I, the traveller, break, still unsatisfied,
From that faint exquisite celestial strand,
And turn and see again the only dwelling-place
In this wide wilderness of darkening land.

The house, that house, O now what change has come to it.
Its crude red-brick façade, its roof of slate;
What imperceptible swift hand has given it
A new, a wonderful, a queenly state?

No hand has altered it, that parallelogram,
So inharmonious, so ill-arranged;
That hard blue roof in shape and colour's what it was;
No, it is not that any line has changed.

Only that loneliness is now accentuate
  And, as the dusk unveils the heaven's deep cave,
This small world's feebleness fills me with awe again,
  And all men's energies seem very brave.

And this mean edifice, which some dull architect
  Built for an ignorant earth-turning hind,
Takes on the quality of that magnificent
  Unshakable dauntlessness of human kind.

Darkness and stars will come, and long the night will be,
  Yet imperturbable that house will rest,
Avoiding gallantly the stars' chill scrutiny,
  Ignoring secrets in the midnight's breast.

Thunders may shudder it, and winds demoniac
  May howl their menaces, and hail descend:
Yet it will bear with them, serenely, steadfastly,
  Not even scornfully, and wait the end.

And all a universe of nameless messengers
  From unknown distances may whisper fear,
And it will imitate immortal permanence,
  And stare and stare ahead and scarcely hear.

It stood there yesterday; it will tomorrow, too,
  When there is none to watch, no alien eyes
To watch its ugliness assume a majesty
  From this great solitude of evening skies.

So lone, so very small, with worlds and worlds around,
  While life remains to it prepared to outface
Whatever awful unconjectured mysteries
  May hide and wait for it in time and space.

ANNA WICKHAM

Anna Wickham was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, in 1883. She went to Australia at six, returned when she was twenty-one, studied for opera in Paris with De Reszke and suddenly, after a few years of marriage, became a poet. In a burst of creative energy she wrote nine hundred poems in four years.

Her first two books were republished in America in one volume, *The Contemplative Quarry* (1921). The most casual reading of Anna Wickham's work reveals the strength of her candor. The poems could scarcely be put in the category of "charming" verse; they are astringent and sometimes harsh; gnarled frequently by their own changes of mood. Her lines present the picture of woman struggling between dreams and domesticity; they are acutely sensitive, restless, analytical. The very tone of her poetry reflects the disturbed music and the nervous intensity of her age.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

I will have few cooking-pots,
They shall be bright;
They shall reflect to blinding
God's straight light.
I will have four garments,
They shall be clean;
My service shall be good,
Though my diet be mean.
Then I shall have excess to give to the poor,
And right to counsel beggars at my door.

THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

ENVOI

God, thou great symmetry,
Who put a biting lust in me
From whence my sorrows spring,
For all the frittered days
That I have spent in shapeless ways,
Give me one perfect thing.

Another poet whose early death was a blow to English literature, James Elroy Flecker, was born in London, November 5, 1884. Possibly due to his low vitality, Flecker at first found little to interest him but a classical reaction against realism in verse, a delight in verbal craftsmanship, and a passion for technical perfection.

The advent of the war began to make Flecker's verse more personal and romantic. The tuberculosis that finally killed him at Davos Platz, Switzerland, January 3, 1915, forced him from an Olympian disinterest to a deep concern with life and death.

His two colorful volumes of poetry are *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913) and *The Old Ships* (1915). Even when he faced emotional reality, it was through the "escape" of an Oriental play, *Hassan* (1922).

STILLNESS

When the words rustle no more,
  And the last work's done,
When the bolt lies deep in the door,
  And Fire, our Sun,
Falls on the dark-laned meadows of the floor;

When from the clock's last chime to the next chime
  Silence beats his drum,
And Space with gaunt grey eyes and her brother Time
  Wheeling and whispering come,
She with the mould of form and he with the loom of rhyme:

Then twittering out in the night my thought-birds flee,
  I am emptied of all my dreams:
I only hear Earth turning, only see
  Ether's long bankless streams,
And only know I should drown if you laid not your hand
    on me.

D. H. LAWRENCE

David Herbert Lawrence, born in 1885, is one of the most intense of the modern poets. This intensity, ranging from a febrile morbidity to an almost frenzied mysticism, is seen in its highest colors in his prose works — particularly in such short stories as *The Prussian Officer* (1917), *The Captain's Doll* (1923), the analytical *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and that darkly rhapsodic novel, *The Rainbow* (1915).

As a poet he is often caught in the net of his own emotions; his passion thickens his utterance and distorts his rhythms, which sometimes seem purposely harsh and bitter-flavored. But, within his range, he is as powerful as he is poignant. His most notable volumes of poetry are *Amores* (1916), *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1918), *New Poems* (1920), and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* (1923). The poem "Green" lets us see why, for a time, Lawrence allied himself with the Imagist group.

PIANO

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

GREEN

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

Shane Leslie, the most distinguished son of Sir John Leslie, was born at Swan Park, Monaghan, Ireland, in 1885 and was educated at Eton and the University of Paris. He worked for a time among the Irish poor and was deeply interested in the Celtic revival.

Leslie has been editor of *The Dublin Review* since 1916. He is the author of several volumes on Irish political matters, as well as *The End of a Chapter* (revised in 1917) and *Verses in Peace and War* (1916). The chief characteristics of his verse are an imaginative sweep and (as in "The Pater of the Cannon") a grimly ironic twist.

FLEET STREET

I never see the newsboys run
  Amid the whirling street,
  With swift untiring feet,
To cry the latest venture done,
But I expect one day to hear
  Them cry the crack of doom
  And risings from the tomb,
With great Archangel Michael near;
And see them running from the Fleet
  As messengers of God,
  With Heaven's tidings shod
About their brave unwearied feet.

HUMBERT WOLFE

Humbert Wolfe was born at Milan in Italy, January 5, 1885. As he himself declared, he "lost no time in crossing to Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which town he reached during the same year and remained there till he left it for Oxford some eighteen years later. Wrote sporadic and increasingly unsatisfactory verse from the age of sixteen till his appointment to the British Civil Service in 1909. This appointment naturally induced in him a more restrained outlook upon life and, beyond a few casual poems and a rejected novel, he had no literary output or recognition till after the War in 1919 In that year, he published *London Sonnets*, followed in the next year by *Shylock Reasons with Mr. Chesterton.* In 1923, he published *Circular Saws*, a collection of ambiguous aphorisms, and, in 1924, *Kensington*

Gardens, a collection of short poems dealing with that delectable locality. It is to be anticipated (and feared) that his output will tend rapidly to increase."

Thus far, Mr. Wolfe. At this point, the editor resumes his task and adds that Humbert Wolfe is, in whatever medium he selects, a distinct and distinguished personality. His prose is keen with so fine an edge that the reader is scarcely aware of the author's dexterous incisions. Wolfe's poetry is of two kinds — grave and charming. Sometimes the two qualities are mingled, although the tenderly whimsical note dominates in *Kensington Gardens*. The more recent poems reveal the larger Wolfe — one of the most skilful, sensitive artists of his day; a poet who delights to experiment in rhyme and verbal color. *The Unknown Goddess* (1925) sounds depths with ease and rich clarity.

Humoresque (1926) is less integrated and more sentimental, although Wolfe's "suspended rhymes" are technically interesting. *News of the Devil* (1927) is a Byronic arraignment of modern journalism. *Requiem*, published in 1927, Wolfe's most austere and intricate work, suddenly became, strangely enough, his most popular. Within six months it went into eight editions, roused two controversies, and established Wolfe as one of the most discussed poets since Masefield. A fecund author, Wolfe is editing a series of poetry pamphlets, has made a sequence of paraphrases from the Greek Anthology, *Others Abide* (1927), and, as a final proof of versatility, published his Greek translations at the same time as his *Cursory Rhymes* (1927), a set of sophisticated burlesques for children.

THE GREY SQUIRREL

Like a small grey
coffee-pot,
sits the squirrel.
He is not

all he should be,
kills by dozens
trees, and eats
his red-brown cousins.

The keeper, on the
other hand
, who shot him, is
a Christian, and

loves his enemies,
which shows
the squirrel was not
one of those.

GREEN CANDLES

" There's someone at the door," said gold candlestick:
" Let her in quick, let her in quick! "
" There is a small hand groping at the handle.
Why don't you turn it? " asked green candle.

" Don't go, don't go," said the Heppelwhite chair,
" Lest you find a strange lady there."
" Yes, stay where you are," whispered the white wall:
" There is nobody there at all."

" I know her little foot," grey carpet said:
" Who but I should know her light tread? "
" She shall come in," answered the open door,
" And not," said the room, " go out any more."

LOVE IN JEOPARDY

Here by the rose-tree
they planted once
of Love in Jeopardy
an Italian bronze.

Not love the conqueror,
not love with wings,
but a boy waiting for
perilous things:

his bow unstrung,
unsounded the zither,
and the delicate young
hands clasped together.

as grave as the first
  boy with the first maiden,
outside of the curst
  closed gates of Eden.

But they have ravished
  away this love,
and he is not cherished
  nor spoken of,

save, whenas fluted
  from Eden, blows
for two the transmuted
  phrase of the rose,

thorn note, blossom-note,
  note of the petal,
cool as the rain, but
  trembling a little

as though, brought hither
  from far, one sung
to a mute zither,
  with bow unstrung,

how by a rose-tree
  they planted once
of Love in Jeopardy
  an Italian bronze.

SPEKE

(*A Monument in Kensington Gardens*)

The children play
  at hide and seek
about the monument
  to Speke.

And why should the dead
  explorer mind,
who has nothing to seek
  and nothing to find.

Siegfried (Loraine) Sassoon, the poet whom Masefield hailed as "one of England's most brilliant rising stars," was born September 8, 1886. He was educated at Marlborough and Clare College, Cambridge, and was a captain in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He fought three times in France, once in Palestine, winning the Military Cross for bringing in wounded on the battlefield.

His poetry divides itself sharply in two moods — the lyric and the ironic. His early lilting poems were without significance or individuality. But with *The Old Huntsman* (1917) Sassoon found his own idiom, and became one of the leading younger poets upon the appearance of this striking volume. The first poem, a long monologue evidently inspired by Masefield, gave little evidence of what was to come. Immediately following it, however, came a series of war poems, undisguised in their tragedy and bitterness. Every line of these quivering stanzas bore the mark of a sensitive and outraged nature; there was scarcely a phrase that did not protest against the "glorification" and false glamour of war.

Counter-Attack appeared in 1918. In this volume Sassoon turned entirely from an ordered loveliness to the gigantic brutality of war. At heart a lyric idealist, the bloody years intensified and twisted his tenderness till what was stubborn and satiric in him forced its way to the top. In *Counter-Attack*, Sassoon found his angry outlet. Most of these poems are choked with passion; many of them are torn out, roots and all, from the very core of an intense conviction; they rush on, not so much because of the poet's art but almost in spite of it.

Early in 1920 Sassoon visited America. At the same time he brought out his *Picture Show* (1920), a vigorous answer to those who feared that Sassoon had "written himself out" or had begun to burn away in his own fire. *Recreations*, a privately distributed volume, printed at Christmas, 1923, for his friends, shows Sassoon in a more playfully intellectual vein. Less direct than his deeper notes, these fifteen poems display another highly interesting though less emotional side of Sassoon's genius. *Satirical Poems*, a collection of this *genre*, appeared in 1926.

Sassoon's three volumes are the most vital and unsparing records of the war we have had. They synthesize in poetry what Barbusse's *Under Fire* spreads out in panoramic prose.

DREAMERS

Soldiers are citizens of death's gray land,
  Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows.

In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

THE REAR-GUARD

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
He winked his prying torch with patching glare
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;
And he, exploring fifty feet below
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.
Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw someone lie
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
" I'm looking for headquarters." No reply.
" God blast your neck! " (For days he'd had no sleep.)
" Get up and guide me through this stinking place."
Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
And flashed his beam across the livid face
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
Agony dying hard ten days before;
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.
Alone he staggered on until he found
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground

Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

AFTERMATH

Have you forgotten yet? . . .
For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,
Like traffic checked awhile at the crossing of city ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heavens of life; and you're a man reprieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same,—and War's a bloody game. . . .
Have you forgotten yet? . . .
Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz,—
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on parapets?
Do you remember the rats; and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench,—
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, "Is it all going to happen again?"

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack,—
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?

Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads, those ashen-grey
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet? . . .
Look up, and swear by the green of the Spring that you'll
never forget.

EVERYONE SANG

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on;
and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears, and horror
Drifted away. . . . O, but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the
singing will never be done.

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

The wisdom of the world is this; to say " *There is*
No other wisdom but to gulp what time can give " . . .
To guard no inward vision winged with mysteries;
To hear no voices haunt the hurrying hours we live;
To keep no faith with ghostly friends; never to know
Vigils of sorrow crowned when loveless passions fade . . .
From wisdom such as this to find my gloom I go,
Companioned by those powers who keep me unafraid.

Possibly the most famous of the Georgians, Rupert (Chawner) Brooke, was born at Rugby in August, 1887, his father being assistant master at the school. As a youth, Brooke was keenly interested in all forms of athletics, playing cricket, football, tennis, and swimming as well as most professionals. He was six feet tall, his finely molded head topped with a crown of loose hair of lively brown; "a golden young Apollo," said Edward Thomas. Another friend of his wrote, "To look at, he was part of the youth of the world."

At the very outbreak of the war, Brooke enlisted, fired with an idealism that conquered his irony. After seeing service in Belgium, 1914, he spent the following winter in a training-camp in Dorsetshire and sailed with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in February, 1915, to take part in the unfortunate Dardanelles Campaign.

Brooke never reached his destination. He died of blood-poison at Skyros, April 23, 1915. His early death was one of England's great literary losses. *Collected Poems*, issued posthumously, appeared a few months after.

Brooke's sonnet-sequence, *1914* (from which "The Soldier" is taken), which, with prophetic irony, appeared a few weeks before his death, contains the accents of immortality. And "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (unfortunately too long to reprint in this volume), is fully as characteristic of the lighter and more playful side of Brooke's temperament. Both these phases are combined in "The Great Lover," of which Lascelles Abercrombie has written, "It is life he loves, and not in any abstract sense, but all the infinite little familiar details of life, remembered and catalogued with delightful zest."

SONNET[1]

Oh! Death will find me, long before I tire
  Of watching you; and swing me suddenly
Into the shade and loneliness and mire
  Of the last land! There, waiting patiently,

One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,
  See a slow light across the Stygian tide,
And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing,
  And tremble. And I shall know that you have died.

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[1] From *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*. Copyright, 1915, by John Lane Company and reprinted by permission.

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,
  Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam —
  Most individual and bewildering ghost! —
And turn, and toss your brown delightful head
Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.

THE GREAT LOVER[1]

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable[2] godhead of delight?
Love is a flame; — we have beaconed the world's night.
A city: — and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor: — we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

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[1] From *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke.* Copyright, 1915, by John Lane Company and reprinted by permission.

[2] Indescribable.

These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such —
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .
Dear names,
And thousand others throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing:
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass; —
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass.
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.

— Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers. . . .
But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed
Praise you, " All these were lovely "; say, " He loved."

THE SOLDIER[1]

If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

JOSEPH PLUNKETT

Joseph Plunkett was born in Ireland in 1887 and devoted himself to the cause that has compelled so many martyrs. He gave all his hours and finally his life in an effort to establish the freedom of his country. He was one of the leaders of that group of Nationalists which included MacDonagh and Padraic Pearse.

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[1] From *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*. Copyright, 1915, by John Lane Company and reprinted by permission.

After the Easter Week uprising in Dublin in 1916, Plunkett and his compatriots were arrested by the British Government and executed.

I SEE HIS BLOOD UPON THE ROSE

I see His blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of His eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice — and carven by His power,
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

F. W. HARVEY

Frederick William Harvey, born in Gloucestershire in 1888, was a lance-corporal in the English army and was in the German prison camp at Gütersloh when he wrote *The Bugler*, one of the isolated great poems written during the war. Much of his other verse is haphazard and journalistic, although *Gloucestershire Friends* (1917) contains several lines that glow with the colors of poetry.

THE BUGLER

God dreamed a man;
Then, having firmly shut
Life like a precious metal in his fist
Withdrew, His labour done. Thus did begin
Our various divinity and sin.

For some to ploughshares did the metal twist,
And others — dreaming empires — straightway cut
Crowns for their aching foreheads. Others beat
Long nails and heavy hammers for the feet
Of their forgotten Lord. (Who dares to boast
That he is guiltless?) Others coined it: most
Did with it — simply nothing. (Here again
Who cries his innocence?) Yet doth remain
Metal unmarred, to each man more or less,
Whereof to fashion perfect loveliness.

For me, I do but bear within my hand
(For sake of Him our Lord, now long forsaken)
A simple bugle such as may awaken
With one high morning note a drowsing man:
That wheresoe'er within my motherland
That sound may come, 'twill echo far and wide
Like pipes of battle calling up a clan,
Trumpeting men through beauty to God's side.

T. P. CAMERON WILSON

"Tony" P. Cameron Wilson was born in South Devon in 1889 and was educated at Exeter and Oxford. He wrote one novel besides several articles under the pseudonym *Tipuca*, a euphonic combination of the first three initials of his name. *Magpies in Picardy*, a posthumous collection, appeared in 1919.

When the war broke out he was a teacher in a school at Hindhead, Surrey; and, after many months of gruelling conflict, he was given a captaincy. He was killed in action by a machine-gun bullet March 23, 1918, at the age of twenty-nine.

SPORTSMEN IN PARADISE

They left the fury of the fight,
  And they were very tired.
The gates of Heaven were open quite,
  Unguarded and unwired.

There was no sound of any gun,
 The land was still and green;
Wide hills lay silent in the sun,
 Blue valleys slept between.

They saw far-off a little wood
 Stand up against the sky.
Knee-deep in grass a great tree stood;
 Some lazy cows went by . . .
There were some rooks sailed overhead,
 And once a church-bell pealed.
"*God! but it's England,*" someone said,
 "*And there's a cricket-field!*"

W. J. TURNER

Walter James (Redfern) Turner was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1889. He was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, and, at seventeen, made the long journey to Europe. He studied in Germany and, shortly afterward, went to England, where he has lived ever since.

His activities have been numerous. He was literary editor of *The Daily Herald*, dramatic critic of *The London Mercury*, and is, at present, musical critic for three English weeklies.

But it is as a poet that Turner first aroused — and still challenges — attention. *The Hunter and Other Poems* (1916) contains other matter worth attention besides the whimsical delicacy of "Romance," which has been so much quoted. *The Dark Fire* (1918) sounds greater depths; a repressed passion adds a somber note to the bright fancies. Turner's more recent volumes, *Paris and Helen* (1921), *In Time Like Glass* (1921) and *Landscape of Cytherea* (1923), suffer from an overproductive and uncritical ease.

ROMANCE

When I was but thirteen or so
 I went into a gold land.
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
 Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play, —
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school —
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away.

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower —
O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day;
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi,
They had stolen my soul away!

SONG

Lovely hill-torrents are
At cold winterfall;
Among the earth's silence, they
Stonily call.

Gone Autumn's pageantry;
Through woods all bare
With strange, locked voices
Shining they stare!

Francis Ledwidge was born in Slane, County Meath, Ireland, in 1891. His brief life was fitful and romantic. He was, at various times, a miner, a grocer's clerk, a farmer, a scavenger, an experimenter in hypnotism, and, at the end, a soldier. He served as a lance-corporal on the Flanders front and was killed in July, 1917, at the age of twenty-six years.

Ledwidge's poetry is rich in nature imagery; his lines are full of color, unaffectedly melodious and clear.

Discovered and sponsored by Lord Dunsany, Ledwidge published two volumes during his lifetime: *Songs of the Fields* (1914) and *Songs of Peace* (1916). Both books (as well as the posthumous *Last Songs*) were incorporated in *Complete Poems* (1919).

THE WIFE OF LLEW

And Gwydion said to Math, when it was Spring:
"Come now and let us make a wife for Llew."
And so they broke broad boughs yet moist with dew,
And in a shadow made a magic ring:
They took the violet and the meadow-sweet
To form her pretty face, and for her feet
They built a mound of daisies on a wing,
And for her voice they made a linnet sing
In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.
And over all they chanted twenty hours.
And Llew came singing from the azure south
And bore away his wife of birds and flowers.

IRENE RUTHERFORD McLEOD

Irene Rutherford McLeod, born August 21, 1891, has written three volumes of direct verse, the best of which may be found in *Songs to Save a Soul* (1915) and *Before Dawn* (1918). The latter volume is dedicated to A. de Sélincourt, to whom she was married in 1919.

LONE DOG

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff and kick and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,
Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide.
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and hunger of the quest!

RICHARD ALDINGTON

Richard Aldington was born in England in 1892, and educated at Dover College and London University. His first poems were published in England in 1909; *Images Old and New* appeared in 1915.

Aldington, H. D., Amy Lowell, and John Gould Fletcher are considered the finest of the Imagist poets; their sensitive, firm and clean-cut lines put to shame their scores of imitators. Aldington's *War and Love* (1918) and *Exile and Other Poems* (1923) are somewhat more regular in pattern, more humanized in their warmth.

IMAGES

I

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dank canals of Venice,
You, O exquisite one,
Have entered into my desolate city.

II

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing.
So my love leaps forth toward you,
Vanishes and is renewed.

III

A rose-yellow moon in a pale sky
When the sunset is faint vermilion
In the mist among the tree-boughs
Art thou to me, my beloved.

IV

A young beech tree on the edge of the forest
Stands still in the evening,
Yet shudders through all its leaves in the light air
And seems to fear the stars —
So are you still and so tremble.

V

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine trees.
And my desires have run with them.

VI

The flower which the wind has shaken
Is soon filled again with rain;
So does my heart fill slowly with tears,
O Foam-Driver, Wind-of-the-Vineyards,
Until you return.

Robert Nichols was born on the Isle of Wight in 1893. His first volume, *Invocations* (1915), was published while he was at the front, Nichols having joined the army while he was still an undergraduate at Trinity College, Oxford. After serving one year as second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, he was incapacitated by shell shock. He visited America in 1918–19 as a lecturer. His *Ardours and Endurances* (1917) is the most representative work of this poet, although *The Flower of Flame* (1920) shows an advance in power.

NEARER

Nearer and ever nearer . . .
My body, tired but tense,
Hovers 'twixt vague pleasure
And tremulous confidence.

Arms to have and to use them
And a soul to be made
Worthy, if not worthy;
If afraid, unafraid.

To endure for a little,
To endure and have done:
Men I love about me,
Over me the sun!

And should at last suddenly
Fly the speeding death,
The four great quarters of heaven
Receive this little breath.

WILFRED OWEN

Wilfred Owen's biography is pitifully brief. He was born at Oswestry on the 18th of March, 1893, was educated at the Birkenhead Institute, matriculated at London University in 1910, obtained a private tutorship in 1913 near Bordeaux and remained there for two years. In 1915, in spite of delicate health, he joined the Artist's

Rifles, served in France from 1916 to June, 1917, when he was invalided home. Fourteen months later, he returned to the Western Front, was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in October and was killed — with tragic irony — a week before the armistice, on November 4, 1918, while trying to get his men across the Sombre Canal.

Owen's name was unknown to the world until his friend Siegfried Sassoon unearthed the contents of his posthumous volume, *Poems* (1920), to which Sassoon wrote the introduction. It was evident at once that here was one of the most important contributions to the literature of the War, expressed by a poet whose courage was only surpassed by his integrity of mind and his nobility of soul. The restrained passion as well as the pitiful outcries in Owen's poetry have a spiritual kinship with Sassoon's stark verses. They reflect that second stage of the war, when the glib patter wears thin and the easy patriotics have a sardonic sound in the dug-outs and trenches. "He never," writes Sassoon, "wrote his poems (as so many war-poets did) to make the effect of a personal gesture. He pitied others; he did not pity himself."

It is difficult to choose among the score of Owen's compelling and compassionate poems. Time will undoubtedly make a place for lines as authentic as the magnificent "Apologia pro Poemate Meo," the poignant "Greater Love," the majestic dirge, "Anthem for Doomed Youth," among others.

APOLOGIA PRO POEMATE MEO

I, too, saw God through mud —
    The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.
    War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,
    And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.

Merry it was to laugh there —
    Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
    For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
    Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.

I, too, have dropped off fear —
    Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon,
    And sailed my spirit surging, light and clear
    Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn;

And witnessed exultation —
Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,
Shine and lift up with passion of oblation,
Seraphic for an hour, though they were foul.

I have made fellowships —
Untold of happy lovers in old song.
For love is not the binding of fair lips
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long,

By Joy, whose ribbon slips, —
But wound with war's hard wire whose stakes are strong;
Bound with the bandage of the arm that drips;
Knit in the welding of the rifle-thong.

I have perceived much beauty
In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;
Heard music in the silentness of duty;
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest spate.

Nevertheless, except you share
With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,
Whose world is but the trembling of a flare,
And heaven but as the highway for a shell,

You shall not hear their mirth:
You shall not come to think them well content
By any jest of mine. These men are worth
Your tears: You are not worth their merriment.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, —
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

EDITH SITWELL

Edith Sitwell, daughter of Sir George and Lady Ida Sitwell, granddaughter of the Earl of Landesborough and sister of the two writers Osbert and Sacheverell, was born at Scarborough, Yorkshire. She was educated, as she puts it, "in secrecy," and in 1914 came to London, where she has lived ever since.

In 1916, she began the editing of *Wheels*, a determinedly "modern" anthology which outraged most of the conservative critics. Her own poems provided an even greater series of shocks. After a mild and undistinguished début — *The Mother and Other Poems* (1915) — Miss Sitwell published, in a succession so speedy as to seem little less than rapid-fire, *Clowns' Houses* (1918), *The Wooden Pegasus* (1920), *Façade* (1922), *Bucolic Comedies* (1923). In these volumes — particularly in the last two — Miss Sitwell limits her gamut; but, within her range, there is no poet quite like her. Her favorite instrument seems to be the xylophone, and it is amazing what effects she produces from its restricted timbre. Miss Sitwell is a virtuoso in the communication of a half-wooden, half-glassy tone which is seldom without brilliance.

The readers who have been waiting for Miss Sitwell to "humanize" her hard, bright idiom will be rewarded by *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924) and *Troy Park* (1926). Here, in what is obviously her finest work so far, she achieves a unity, a sustained poignance, which her other work, for all its felicities, never expressed.

INTERLUDE

Amid this hot green glowing gloom
A word falls with a raindrop's boom . . .

Like baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird-songs seem, suspended where

Those goldfinches — the ripe warm lights
Peck slyly at them — take quick flights.

My feet are feathered like a bird
Among the shadows scarcely heard;

I bring you branches green with dew
And fruits that you may crown anew

Your whirring waspish-gilded hair
Amid this cornucopia —

Until your warm lips bear the stains
And bird-blood leap within your veins.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

Sylvia Townsend Warner, born in 1893, although a writer of extremely sensitive and incisive verse, was little known until the publication of her fantastic novel, *Lolly Willowes, or The Passionate Huntsman* (1926). Her volume of poetry, *The Espalier* (1925), had already prepared its readers for work of a particularly distinguished kind. There is not a mediocre sentiment nor a slipshod line in this volume, whether Miss Warner is writing in the broad bucolic vein which may well be thought her *forte* or whether she is fashioning concise epitaphs which reveal her as a master of condensation. This concentrated quality is again manifest in the delightfully acrid *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* (1927) and the more recent unpublished verses, from which the following have been taken.

COUNTRY THOUGHT

Idbury bells are ringing
And Westcote has just begun,
And down in the valley
Ring the bells of Bledington.

To hear all the church-bells
Ring-ringing together,
Chiming so pleasantly
As if nothing were the matter,

The notion might come
To some religious thinker
That The Lord God Almighty
Is a travelling tinker,

Who travels through England
From north to south,
And sits him at the roadside
With a pipe in his mouth,

A-tinkling and a-tinkering
To mend up the souls
That week-day wickedness
Has worn into holes.

And yet there is not
One tinker, but Three —
One at Westcote, One at Bledington
And One at Idbury.

THREE EPITAPHS

I, an unwedded wandering dame,
For quiet into the country came:
Here, hailed it; but did not foretell
I'd stay so long and rest so well.

*

I, Richard Kent, beneath these stones,
Sheltered my old and trembling bones;
But my best manhood, quick and brave,
Lies buried in another grave.

*

Her grieving parents cradled here
Ann Monk, a gracious child and dear.
Lord, let this epitaph suffice:
Early to Bed and Early to Rise.

Charles Hamilton Sorley, who promised greater things than any of the younger poets, was born at Old Aberdeen in May, 1895. He studied at Marlborough College and University College, Oxford. He was finishing his studies abroad and was on a walking-tour along the banks of the Moselle when the war came. Sorley returned home to receive an immediate commission in the 7th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. In August, 1915, at the age of twenty, he was made a captain. On October 13, 1915, he was killed in action near Hulluch.

Sorley left but one book, *Marlborough and Other Poems*. The verse contained in it is sometimes rough but never rude. Restraint, tolerance, and a dignity unusual for a boy of twenty, distinguish his poetry.

TWO SONNETS

I

Saints have adored the lofty soul of you.
Poets have whitened at your high renown.
We stand among the many millions who
Do hourly wait to pass your pathway down.
You, so familiar, once were strange: we tried
To live as of your presence unaware.
But now in every road on every side
We see your straight and steadfast signpost there.

I think it like the signpost in my land
Hoary and tall, which pointed me to go
Upward, into the hills, on the right hand,
Where the mists swim and the winds shriek and blow,
A homeless land and friendless, but a land
I did not know and that I wished to know.

II

Such, such is death: no triumph: no defeat:
Only an empty pail, a slate rubbed clean,
A merciful putting away of what has been.

And this we know: Death is not Life effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvellous things know well the end not yet.

Victor and vanquished are a-one in death:
Coward and brave: friend, foe. Ghosts do not say,
" Come, what was your record when you drew breath? "
But a big blot has hid each yesterday
So poor, so manifestly incomplete.
And your bright Promise, withered long and sped,
Is touched; stirs, rises, opens and grows sweet
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead.

TO GERMANY

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But gropers both, through fields of thought confined,
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm,
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

ROBERT GRAVES

Robert Graves was born in England of mixed Irish, Scottish and German stock, July 26, 1895. Like Sassoon, Graves also reacts against the storm of fury and blood-lust (see his poem "To a Dead Boche"), but, fortified by a lighter and more whimsical spirit, where Sassoon is violent, Graves is volatile; where Sassoon is bitter Graves is almost blithe.

An infectious gayety rises from his *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917); in *Country Sentiment* (1919) Graves turns to a fresh and more serious simplicity. A buoyant fancy ripples beneath the most archaic of his ballads, and a quaintly original turn of mind saves them from their own echoes.

The Pier Glass (1921) and *Whipperginny* (1923) are less emotional, more intellectually experimental. *Country Sentiment* was, so Graves says, "an endeavor to escape from a painful war neurosis into an Arcadia of amatory fancy. But the prevailing mood of *The Pier Glass* is aggressive and disciplinary rather than escapist." *Whipperginny*, like the succeeding *Mock Beggar Hall* (1924), is conscious, almost self-conscious, philosophizing mixed with a fantasy that is both wild and delicate. *Collected Poems*, containing more determinedly intellectual verse, was published in 1927.

IT'S A QUEER TIME

It's hard to know if you're alive or dead
When steel and fire go roaring through your head.

One moment you'll be crouching at your gun
Traversing, mowing heaps down half in fun:
The next, you choke and clutch at your right breast —
No time to think — leave all — and off you go . . .
To Treasure Island where the Spice winds blow,
To lovely groves of mango, quince, and lime —
Breathe no good-bye, but ho, for the Red West!
It's a queer time.

You're charging madly at them yelling "Fag!"
When somehow something gives and your feet drag.
You fall and strike your head; yet feel no pain
And find . . . you're digging tunnels through the hay
In the Big Barn, 'cause it's a rainy day.
Oh, springy hay, and lovely beams to climb!
You're back in the old sailor suit again.
It's a queer time.

Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out —
A great roar — the trench shakes and falls about —
You're struggling, gasping, struggling, then . . . *hullo!*
Elsie comes tripping gaily down the trench,
Hanky to nose — that lyddite makes a stench —

Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time.

The trouble is, things happen much too quick;
Up jump the Boches, rifles thump and click,
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away:
Even good Christians don't like passing straight
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate
To Alleluiah-chanting, and the chime
Of golden harps . . . and . . . I'm not well today . . .
It's a queer time.

NEGLECTFUL EDWARD

Nancy

Edward, back from the Indian Sea,
"What have you brought for Nancy?"

Edward

"A rope of pearls and a gold earring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing.
A carven tooth, a box with a key —"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," says she,
"Have you nothing more for your Nancy?"

Edward

"Long as I sailed the Indian Sea
I gathered all for your fancy:
Toys and silk and jewels I bring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing:
What more can you want, dear girl, from me?"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," said she,
"Have you nothing better for Nancy?"

Edward

" Safe and home from the Indian Sea,
And nothing to take your fancy? "

Nancy

" You can keep your pearls and your gold earring,
And your bird of the East that will not sing,
But, Ned, have you nothing more for me
Than heathenish gew-gaw toys? " says she,
" Have you nothing better for Nancy? "

LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see,
Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man:
Across two counties he can hear,
And catch your words before you speak,
The woodlouse or the maggot's weak
Clamour rings in his sad ear;
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence: — drinking sound of grass,
Worm-talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling holes in cloth:
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honour's sake,
Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin:
Whir of spiders when they spin,
And minute, whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.
This man is quickened so with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.

Louis Golding was born in Manchester in November, 1895, and received his early education at Manchester Grammar School. War found him in 1914 and took him to Macedonia and France, where he did considerable social and educational work in several armies.

On his return to England in 1919, he published his first volume of poems, *Sorrow of War*, and in the same year resumed his career at Oxford. The succeeding collection, *Shepherd Singing Ragtime* (1921) and his remarkable novel *Forward From Babylon* (1921), appeared while he was still an undergraduate. *Prophet and Fool* (1923) is the American title of his two poetic volumes.

Seacoast of Bohemia (1923), a satiric novel, was followed by various travel-books, the best of which are *Sunward* (1924) and *Sicilian Noon* (1925). Of his novels, the best-known are *Day of Atonement* (1924) and *The Miracle Boy* (1927).

PLOUGHMAN AT THE PLOUGH

He, behind the straight plough, stands
Stalwart; firm shafts in firm hands.

Naught he cares for wars and naught
For the fierce disease of thought.

Only for the winds, the sheer
Naked impulse of the year,

Only for the soil which stares
Clean into God's face, he cares.

In the stark might of his deed
There is more than art or creed;

In his wrist more strength is hid
Than the monstrous Pyramid;

Stauncher than stern Everest
Be the muscles of his breast;

Not the Atlantic sweeps a flood
Potent as the ploughman's blood.

He, his horse, his ploughshare, these
Are the only verities.

Dawn to dusk, with God he stands,
The Earth poised on his broad hands

THE SINGER OF HIGH STATE

On hills too harsh for firs to climb,
Where eagle dare not hatch her brood,
On the sheer peak of Solitude,
With anvils of black granite crude
He beats austerities of rhyme.

Such godlike stuff his spirit drinks,
He made great odes of tempest there.
The steel-winged eagle, if he dare
To cleave these tracts of frozen air,
Hearing such music, swoops and sinks.

Stark tumults, which no tense night awes,
Of godly love and titan hate
Down crags of song reverberate.
Held by the Singer of High State,
Battalions of the midnight pause.

On hills uplift from Space and Time,
On the sheer peak of Solitude,
With stars to give his furnace food,
On anvils of black granite crude
He beats austerities of rhyme.

SUGGESTIONS TO INCREASE ENJOYMENT OF MODERN POETRY

In spite of all research, it is still a matter of dispute as to what impels the artist to create. But when he exhibits his canvas, publishes his symphony, prints his poem, his immediate purpose is to share his pleasure with an unknown audience. This sharing is an impulse as universal as creation itself. No matter what the artist's work may be made to teach, *its first object is to increase enjoyment.*

These suggestions for study are offered solely with the hope that they will help readers toward that "increased enjoyment." The task is comparatively simple since the organic quality of poetry (rhythm or cadence) is equally an organic part of every human being. Poetry may well have had its origin in the rhythms which surround man and of which he is less than half-conscious; the beat of verse existed in the pulse before speech sprang to the lips. We breathe rhythmically; the tides regularly ebb and flow; day and night, light and darkness, the progress of the seasons, all have an *ordered* cycle. This measure of time begins in the very cradle — even before that period, when the child is rocked upon its mother's breast. From that time on rhythm dominates. The lullaby, the unworded tune, the brisk jingles of Mother Goose, awake an instant response from every child.

Children frequently lose their instinctive love of poetry because their power to understand its condensed expression does not keep pace with the difficulty of the poetry given them to read. Often a poem is spoiled for them by being made a "word-study," or analyzed wholly as a matter of structure, like a problem in mathematics. It cannot be repeated too many times that literature is, primarily, an art and that its object is pleasurable appreciation, not the mere collecting of information. Often, too, the remoter classics reflect a background of life which few can understand without many explanations and references.

If one were to read Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia," for example, in the year 2128 instead of in 1928, one would have to search through antique dictionaries for the meaning of much which needs no explanation today. The appeal of modern poetry is due to poet and reader speaking the same language. They get together without the use of glossaries or interpreters; the contact is spontaneous and immediate, the enjoyment correspondingly increased.

Once beyond the intuitive stage of enjoyment, poetry demands more. First and last it demands an open mind and a sympathetic attitude on the part of the reader. The poet has written under the spell of intense emotional and intellectual excitement. He has been seized by some mood or the force of some incident, and there has been conceived in him this living thing, this order out of chaos — a poem. His search for words, and the form which makes his conception alive, combine in an act of creation.

The reader (and, preëminently, the teacher) must react to this intense creation. He must understand and share as much of the emotional turmoil or intellectual fervor as possible. He must sense, beneath the germ-thought which lies at the core of the poem, the sugggestive phrase, the illuminating epithet. He must familiarize himself not only with details but with implications. He must feel the swing of rhythm in his blood. He should even be conscious of the pattern or form on which the whole is built. It is by this process that the possible poet in each one is made aware and articulate. The author of the poem lives vicariously with every new reader.

The way toward an adequate reaction lies partly through the heart and partly through the head. All we have ever known or thought is at the command of a poem if we react sensitively to it.

Try analyzing your reactions to the poem "Renascence" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, one of the most widely read poems of the day. Remember that poetry stimulates our power to image; it appeals to our inborn sense of rhythm or cadence; it commands a recognition to the compressed meaning of word or phrase.

Notice how simply the poem begins, how easily it establishes the scene and its backgrounds:

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.

And so it proceeds in the very tone of a child's counting-out rhyme. The rhythm is so definite, the speech so direct, that a contact between the reader and the poet is achieved at once.

So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.

Thus the very simplicity, the "tone of speech," has vividly reflected not only the landscape seen by the poet, but the mood evoked by it. As one reads further the contact grows closer, one yields more and more to the spell of the words. Familiar details take on a larger significance. The actual scene is so surcharged with emotion that it becomes *more* than actual and is lifted into the plane of the spiritual.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past,
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense . . .

Lying there upon the grass, the young poet is in such close touch with the sky, the mountains, and Infinity, that what started to be a rhymed record of a scene becomes a vision of immensities. She becomes part of the earth itself, suffers all its pangs, is pierced by every twisting root.

. . . Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust;
Mine every greed, mine every lust.

She sees a man starving in Capri — and starves with him. She sees two ships strike together in a great fog-bank, hears a thousand screams smite the heavens — "and every scream tore through my throat." But, as the poem proceeds, we see her sharing not only the anguish of earth but all its joys and growths. As though deep in the ground, she feels each penetrating drop of rain, every searching sunbeam. She prays to be restored to mere finite existence, to the little things of everyday. And suddenly she feels

The grass, a-tip-toe at my ear . . .
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips . . .
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see —
A drenched and dripping apple-tree . . .

She has found an answer to the overpowering immensities. Fron now on she is vibrantly identified with all that lives and struggles and grows about her.

O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee. . . .
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

And so the poem draws to its close, mounting ever higher with a quiet but convincing certainty. And the reader mounts with it. The poet's identification of all of life has been shared, apprehended, completed. *And it is the reader who has made the final completion.* By means so simple and yet so subtle that he is hardly aware of it, the reader has ceased being merely a reader and has become the chief actor in the poem — has become, during the taking-on of this intense emotional experience, the poet herself.

* * * *

Ability to judge poetry increases enjoyment of poetry. Because poetry is such an intensely personal thing, there will always be certain poems which will appeal to one reader more than to another. But trained readers usually agree as to what constitutes genuine poetry. Taste in poetry is, moreover, to some extent a matter of cultivation.

Many teachers believe that the ability to judge poetry, to select the better from the less good, or from the really poor, can be consciously trained. Dr. Allan Abbott and Dr. Marion R. Trabue, of Columbia University, have devised a series of tests which afford interesting (and amusing) exercises for teachers and students. Doctor Abbott's report in the *Teachers College Record* for March, 1921, illustrates the point.

The plan on which the tests were prepared is stated by Doctor Abbott as follows: "Certain characteristics are commonly thought to be so important in poetry that their loss would spoil the poem for the eye of any intelligent critic not blinded by controversy. Among these are emotional tone, the imaginative quality of the thought, and the rhythmic form. In lowering the poetic quality then of each poem, the attempt has been in one version (called the 'sentimental') to falsify the emotion by introducing silly, gushy, affected or otherwise insincere feelings; in another version (the 'prosaic') to reduce the poet's imagery to a more pedestrian or commonplace level; in the third (the 'metrical') to render the movement either entirely awkward or less fine and subtle than the original."

Amy Lowell's children's poem, "To a Sea Shell," was one of those used by Dr. Abbott. This is the original version:

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing me a song, Oh please!
A song of ships and sailor men,
Of parrots and tropical trees.
Of islands lost in the Spanish Main
Which no man ever may find again,
Of fishes and coral under the waves
And sea-horses stabled in great green caves.
Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing me a song, Oh please!

Now note the effect of falsifying the emotion by introducing "silly, gushy, insincere" expressions in the "sentimental" version:

Tender, tender Sea Shell,
Wilt thou sing me, please,
Of thy happy home,
'Neath the tropic seas?

Ah, the coral islands!
Ah, the wondrous fish!
For such a song I'd give thee, dear,
Whate'er a shell could wish.

Read the prosaic version, in which the author's fantastic imagery has been made commonplace:

Sea Shell, please sing me a song
Of ships and sailor men;
Of strange kinds of birds and trees
On the Spanish Main:
Of fish and seaweed in the sea,
And whatever creature there may be,—
Sea Shell, please sing me a song.

And finally observe how the effort to put the verse into another metrical pattern is ruinous to the grace of the lines.

Sea Shell, I ask you, will
You sing a song, please,
All about the ships and sailors
And the parrots in their tropical trees.
The islands I have read about on the Spanish Main
That no one will see again;
The fish and coral under the wave,
Sea-horses that have their stables in caves.
Sea Shell, I ask you, will
You sing a song, please.

Group study increases enjoyment of poetry. Poetry must be enjoyed to be appreciated, but increased capacity for enjoyment comes with increased appreciation. To read certain poems in groups often leads to greater enjoyment. The following Group Studies are merely suggestive of many others which anyone can make for himself. It is possible to select from this and other anthologies poems (to mention only a few groups) about the sea, about woods, about spring, patriotism, characters, countrysides, love, children, flowers, courage, and so *ad infinitum.* The groups which follow are typical of subjects which are arresting the attention of many of our present-day poets. And they arrest us because, first of all, they reflect the life and thought of our day.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING THE POEMS IN GROUPS

The following suggestions are merely indicative of the trend which the discussion of the poems might take. One of the pleasantest aspects of the study of poetry, modern or classic, is the unexpectedness of the reactions which result when a group of people talk things over.

Before beginning, it is well to remember that in every poem there are many considerations possible. We need not be attentive to all these points all the time, but the richest understanding comes when we are able to be unconsciously sensitive to as many as possible in every poem we read.

In every poem we should detect the germ-thought; we should be able to see pictures, to appreciate the compressed thought or phrase, to sense the rhythm or cadence of the lines, to detect the particular rhyme scheme and pattern on which the poem is built. In addition, we should be quick to recognize sentimentalized expression, prosaic thinking, awkward forms and imperfect rhymes. In a given poem it may be interesting to stress only one or two of these details, but we should have all such bases of judgment ready for use.

It remains to call attention to one thing more. The suggestions for study have been divided into two general groups. In one or two instances the division is somewhat arbitrary; the two sections, however, are not only meant to contrast but to complement each other. Part I deals chiefly with the technical aspects of poetry and its various types. Part II is somewhat more informal and endeavors to show the variety of theme and treatment. The first part thus offers convenient material for the study of *structure*, whereas the second part emphasizes the content and *quality*.

PART I

1. POEMS AS STORIES

In which the narrative is given a sharper accent by the use of rhyme and precise rhythm.

Jim Bludso	*John Hay* (p. 64)
Jim	*Bret Harte* (p. 67)
Plain Language from Truthful James	*Bret Harte* (p. 68)
The Valley That God Forgot	*H. H. Knibbs* (p. 127)
The Glory Trail	*Badger Clark* (p. 180)
Merchants from Cathay	*William Rose Benét* (p. 209)
Jesse James	*William Rose Benét* (p. 211)
A Lady Comes to an Inn	*Elizabeth J. Coatsworth* (p. 249)
Gunga Din	*Rudyard Kipling* (p. 318)
"Tommy"	*Rudyard Kipling* (p. 325)
A Broken Song	*Moira O'Neill* (p. 342)
The Listeners	*Walter De la Mare* (p. 348)
The Stone	*W. W. Gibson* (p. 362)

Jim Bludso . . . . *Hay* (p. 64)

In order to appreciate the effect of rhyme and rhythm in condensing and sharpening narrative, try telling the story or part of it in prose. Which particular details give you a sense of the background and period of the poem? Have you read any stories of the Western pioneers? Which?

Jim. . . . . *Harte* (p. 67)

Notice how condensed the point is in the last stanza. How can you manage to bring out the point of the last two stanzas if you tell them in prose? What explanation would a foreigner need in order to understand the point of the story? Is the humor "broad" or "sly"? Select phrases to support your opinion.

The Valley That God Forgot . . . . *Knibbs* (p. 127)

Show, by telling the story in your own language, that the poem is clear to you. Which lines do you like best? Why?

The Glory Trail. . . . . *Clark* (p. 180)

Poetry paints a whole canvas in a word or phrase. Notice the effect of such descriptive bits as "high-chinned Bob," "thankful chops," "mav'rick-hungry rope," "roped him 'round his meal." Notice how the strongly marked rhythm tends to make one feel the loping gallop of the rider.

Merchants from Cathay . . . . *Benét* (p. 209)
Jesse James . . . . *Benét* (p. 211)

Here are two narratives in which the story is made more vivid through rhyme and rhythm. Notice how certain lines tend to linger in the memory without effort. Can you select some of them? Which of the two narratives do you prefer? Why? What details in "Merchants of Cathay" seem the most fantastic? Which details in "Jesse James" strike you as the most realistic? Why does the poet give the latter poem the subtitle "A Design in Red and Yellow for a Nickel Library"? Jesse James was a famous American bandit who became a legendary figure. Can you name his English counterpart? What can be said in favor of these outlaws?

Gunga Din . . . . *Kipling* (p. 318)

In "Gunga Din" the charm of the rhyme-scheme and the emphasis on the beat are apparent at once. Can you select another poem where the rhyme and the swing of the verse are so strong? (Do you know "The Highwayman" by Alfred Noyes?) Who is the more heroic, the actual soldier or the mere water-carrier? Could you tell a story of the same battle and the same situation from the standpoint of Gunga Din?

"Tommy" . . . . *Kipling* (p. 325)

"Tommy Atkins" is the name by which the British common soldier is known. Here a typical "Tommy" speaks his mind. Compare the attitude of the speaker in this poem with that of the speaker in "Gunga Din." What would you say are the chief differences? Compare this poem with one of the other poems of soldier life by Kipling, such as "Fuzzy Wuzzy." Do the poems present a contrast or carry out a sense of character?

A Lady Comes to an Inn . . . . *Coatsworth* (p. 249)
A Broken Song . . . . *O'Neill* (p. 342)
The Listeners . . . . *De la Mare* (p. 348)

Here are three narratives in which the stories are suggested rather than told. What effect is gained thereby? Is your imagination more stimulated because of what has been left out, which the mind must fill in? In "A Lady Comes to an Inn," for example, what is the principal effect of the poem: (a) curiosity? (b) terror? (c) beauty? (d) wonder? What would so lovely and delicate a woman be doing in so strange a place? Why had she chosen three such curious companions? Could you write a story showing how it all came about? What country provides the setting for "A Broken Song"? Is the pathos greater because the incidents leading up to it are only implied? Here again can you supply the outline of what went before? "The Listeners" is more definitely in the realm of the fantastic. Why has the rider come? What gives the poem its undercurrent of challenge and heroism? Compare it with "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." Is "The Listeners" in any sense symbolic? Does the rider possibly represent Man faced with the great Unknown? Could you furnish this poem with a "plot"?

The Stone .... *Gibson* (p. 362)

Here is a narrative which is fully explained by the speaker. This poem derives its power not only from the tale, but from the way in which it is told, from its repetitions, from its very deliberate summing up of detail. Which is the more clearly drawn: the stone-cutter or the woman who orders the stone to be cut? Notice how the story plunges at once into the very center of the tale. Is this an advantage? Why? Could you reduce the theme of the poem to a short paragraph? Would such repetitions as the following be effective in prose?

> And fixed her gray eyes on my face,
> With still, unseeing stare.
> And as she waited patiently,
> I could not bear to feel
> Those still, gray eyes that followed me,
> Those eyes that plucked the breath from me,
> And curdled the warm blood in me,
> Those eyes that cut me to the boe,
> And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

Select other poems in this or other anthologies which are also stories in verse. Can you express clearly what seem to you the advantages of telling a story in verse instead of in prose? Name five poems of the past (not in this collection) which have been founded on fact — such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade." What has been gained by the poetic form? Try taking a familiar prose story, perhaps one of Kipling's or James Oliver Curwood's, and telling part of it in verse, either rhymed or unrhymed. The entire class might try this exercise, either dividing the story among groups or having all try the same part.

America, young though it is, is beginning to accumulate its own folk-lore and folk-songs. Some of these, notably the Kentucky Mountain tunes, are adaptations of old English ballads brought over by the settlers and "varied" by the mountaineers. Others, like the Negro Spirituals and the cowboy ballads, are native to the very roots. Do you know any of these? Have you ever heard any of the older people sing the Jesse James song that ends "The dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard has laid poor Jesse in his grave"? Or any others?

Among the many collections containing genuine American folk-tune and racy story-poems, the best are Lomax's *Cowboy Songs*, Howard Brockway's *Lonesome Tunes*, and Carl Sandburg's richly inclusive *The American Songbag*. Contrast a poem from one of these collections, or from any other, with some little-known American ballad which you may have discovered.

"Old Christmas Morning" by Roy Helton (page 224) is a particularly fine narrative in ballad form. Contrast it with one of the anonymous ballads which are not at all "literary," but which have an undeniable vigor and quality of their own. Which do you prefer? Why?

If you are interested in the origin and growth of this fascinating division of poetry, an examination of *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (edited from the collection of Francis J. Child by Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge) would be well worth while.

2. THE NEW REALISM

". . . and all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen."

Miniver Cheevy	*E. A. Robinson* (p. 105)
Richard Cory	*E. A. Robinson* (p. 109)
Bewick Finzer	*E. A. Robinson* (p. 110)

Petit, the Poet	*Edgar Lee Masters* (p. 112)
Lucinda Matlock	*Edgar Lee Masters* (p. 112)
Anne Rutledge	*Edgar Lee Masters* (p. 113)
Mending Wall	*Robert Frost* (p. 141)
An Old Man's Winter Night	*Robert Frost* (p. 147)
The Tuft of Flowers	*Robert Frost* (p. 143)
Taking Away the Banking	*Wilbert Snow* (p. 189)
Brass Spittoons	*Langston Hughes* (p. 261)
The Return	*Rudyard Kipling* (p. 321)
Rounding the Horn	*John Masefield* (p. 360)

Read the subdivisions in the Preface marked "Renascence — 1913," "Robinson and Masters," "Robert Frost," "Summary — The New Spirit." Discuss the chief points.

Miniver Cheevy	*Robinson* (p. 105)
Richard Cory	*Robinson* (p. 109)
Berwick Finzer	*Robinson* (p. 110)

"E. A. Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct and clarifying utterance which was to become part of our present technique. . . . His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures, were a sharp reaction to the current high valuations on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency, and success at any cost."

Do you think these poems reveal Robinson's ideals as they are expressed in the passage above? What have "Miniver Cheevy" and "Bewick Finzer" in common? Are they types you know or would recognize? Does the poet seem to be more sympathetic with success or failure? Does the tragedy of "Richard Cory" seem impossible? Name some more or less recent newspaper story that is equally surprising.

Petit, the Poet	*Masters* (p. 112)
Lucinda Matlock	*Masters* (p. 112)
Anne Rutledge	*Masters* (p. 113)

"Yet had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly balanced work. But the book ascends to buoyant exaltation and ends on a plane of victorious idealism."

Can you discover the traces not only of disillusionment, but of victorious idealism in the above extracts from "Spoon River Anthology"? Describe them.

Mending Wall................................*Frost* (p. 141)
The Tuft of Flowers ....*Frost* (p. 143)
An Old Man's Winter Night...................*Frost* (p. 147)

"Loving above everything else the beauty of Fact, Frost shares with Robinson and Masters the determination to tell not merely the actual, but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wears his rue and his realism with a difference. Where Robinson is downright and definite, Frost diverges, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters is violent and hotly scornful, Frost is reticent and quietly sympathetic."

Can you justify any statement in the quotation from the preface by referring to the poems? What is the idea back of "Mending Wall"? Why did the poet say first in "The Tuft of Flowers":

> And I must be, as he had been, — alone,
> "As all must be," I said within my heart,
> "Whether they work together or apart."

and then later in the poem:

> "Men work together," I told him from the heart,
> "Whether they work together or apart."

Does "Mending Wall" give you anything more than a picture of an old custom in New England? Are the two types of men differentiated? In what way? Which speaker might represent the spirit of today? What does he say that leads you to think so?

What is the chief effect of "An Old Man's Winter Night"? What is its outstanding quality? Which lines linger in the mind? Could this mood be characteristic of a young boy? Why not? Does the poem give you an idea of the poet as well as the character it portrays?

Taking Away the Banking...................*Snow* (p. 189)

Definitely indebted to Robert Frost, Wilbert Snow shows the same close feeling for the soil. This poem is a description of what is a common sight in Maine at the end of the winter. Even though you knew nothing of Snow's backgrounds, would you be able to tell what has taken place from the poem itself? What lines show the greatest faculty of observation? What lines show the greatest play of fancy? Can you name any of the quaint or unusual customs that you have observed in your part of the country? What does the poet mean when he says, "We coax the spring along"?

Brass Spittoons .... *Hughes* (p. 261)

This is a striking poem about and by a negro. But where most of the poems of this class are either broadly humorous or in dialect (and usually both), this poem is straightforward in its emotion and its English. It portrays the "other side" of negro industrial life. What is the chief effect of the poem upon you? What lines give you a sense of how harrassed, how "ordered about" the worker is? At what part of the poem do you feel the boy's realization that even in his menial occupation he can make something "beautiful to the Lord"? Why does the end of this poem rise to unexpected heights? How is the central idea of this conclusion related to the central idea of "The Monk in the Kitchen" by Anna Hempstead Branch? Is its climax more or less "religious" than *The Congo?*

The Return .... *Kipling* (p. 321)

"Kipling pierced the coarse exterior of seemingly prosaic things — things like machinery, bridge-building, cockney soldiers, slang, steam, the dirty by-products of science — and uncovered their hidden glamour. 'Romance is gone,' sighed most of his contemporaries,

'and all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.'"

Can you justify this statement also by "The Return"? What are the emotions of Kipling's returned soldier, simply expressed? Compare them with the expressions in poems on a similar theme by poets who actually were soldiers, such as Sassoon, Owen, etc. How does "The Return" differ from "Aftermath"? Notice how much is condensed in the refrain:

"If England was what England seems," etc.

Select other lines in which much is said in a few words. Select lines which summon pictures to your mind.

Rounding the Horn .... *Masefield* (p. 360)

"Synge proclaims: 'the strong things of life are needed in poetry also . . . and it may almost be said that before verse can be human again, it must be brutal.' . . . Masefield brought back to poetry that mixture of beauty and brutality which is its most human and enduring quality."

Do you feel the power, the blind heroism in this extract from "Dauber"? Read the whole poem and see what kind of man this was who *held* in spite of his terror, whose

"... soul, body, brain,
Knew nothing but the wind, the cold, the pain."

Find traces of "beauty" and of "brutality" in this poem. Do Masefield's other poems have this peculiar combination? The long poems are Masefield's most characteristic ones. Try "The Everlasting Mercy" or "The Widow in the Bye Street." Why are boys attracted toward a sailor's life?

3. POEMS OF ACTION

"Boot, saddle, to horse and away!"

The Congo	*Vachel Lindsay* (p. 162)
Old Christmas Morning	*Roy Helton* (p. 224)
Drake's Drum	*Henry Newbolt* (p. 313)
Lepanto	*G. K. Chesterton* (p. 352)
Rounding the Horn	*John Masefield* (p. 360)
Fleet Street	*Shane Leslie* (p. 392)

These poems in one sense are story-poems, but it is not the story which distinguishes them. The narrative element is far less important than the speed with which the poem proceeds. In some cases this speed is achieved by the very rapidity with which detail follows detail; in others it is the briskness of the meter which pushes the reader on. Choose two poems from this group, one of which is remarkable because of its rush of narration, the other depending on the gallop of rhymed syllables for its exciting effect. Compare them, citing the outstanding features of each.

Old Christmas Morning . . . . *Helton* (p. 224)

This is definitely a poem from the heart of the Kentucky mountains. The feud is its background; the action moves tensely in an atmosphere of ghostly cold. Do you realize what has happened before the end? How many climaxes can you find in this poem? It is obvious from the start that two women are speaking. Is it equally plain that one of them is not a living woman? Might this not be made more effective by having two members of the class "act" the poem as a dramatic dialogue? Can you select one of the older ballads which has something of the same chill and unearthly atmosphere? (The best collection is *The Oxford Book of Ballads*.)

Lepanto . . . . *Chesterton* (p. 352)

This poem centers about the battle fought between the Turks and the allied Christian nations in the Gulf of Lepanto in the fall of 1571. The Turks were the aggressors and were by far the more powerful. But the daring of a few men — especially Don John of Austria who captured the flag-ship of the Turkish fleet — broke the power of the Turks and never again did they tower over the peace of Christian Europe. Incidentally this was the last important battle fought between fleets of galleys. It is also of interest to know that, among the famous ones who fought in this battle, was Cervantes, the author of "Don Quixote."

Two main features distinguish this poem: 1, the energy with which it moves; 2, the color and flash of the syllables themselves. Select those passages which seem to you to be fastest in tempo. Select a few which have the most resonant sound and color. What effect is gained by the mixture of long and short lines? Why does the poet end his verses with short and staccato rhythms? What is the general effect (vocally and visually) of the lines beginning:

Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold,
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes. . .

Compare this poem with "The Congo" by Vachel Lindsay. In spite of their utter differences in theme and background, what can you find in common? Why might each of them be said to be a "chant"?

Drake's Drum . . . . *Newbolt* ((p. 313)

Do you know the story of Drake and his naval battles? Can you name his greatest victory? Would this poem stir you if you had never heard of the facts — or of Drake — before? What picture do you derive from the stanzas (a) separately, (b) as a unit? What gives the verses special energy? Why are they easy to remember?

Fleet Street . . . . *Leslie* (p. 392)

Fleet Street is the great journalistic center of London, its famous "Newspaper Row." What American scene might this poem portray? What is the most definite impression conveyed?

4. THE SONNET

". . . With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart."

In poetry certain patterns are more strictly regulated than others and are called "fixed forms." Of these fixed forms none is so important, none has enjoyed so long a life and so great a popularity, as the sonnet. Presumably originating in Italy, it was brought to England early in the sixteenth century and came into wide use even before the time of the Elizabethans. Shakespeare was the first to develop it into a flexible and sonorous instrument, an instrument on which he played some of the greatest melodies of all time. Yet the Shakespearean sonnet is not a "pure" example of the form. Like all sonnets it has fourteen lines, but the rhyme-scheme of the classic sonnet is arranged in a way from which Shakespeare departed. The "true" sonnet, besides being composed of fourteen lines, is divided in two parts: the first eight lines form the *octave*, the last six lines form the *sestet.* The rhyme-scheme of the classic (or Petrarchan) *octave* is invariable and may be expressed thus: *a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a;* the rhyme-scheme of the *sestet* is various, the two favorite forms being *c-d-e-c-d-e* and *c-d-c-d-c-d.* The Shakespearean model is nothing but a set of three quatrains (four-line poems) plus a concluding couplet. It may be expressed by the set of symbols: *a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d-e-f-e-f-g-g.*

Some sonnets run all fourteen lines together; others keep the *octave* and *sestet* separate. When sonnets are so divided, there is usually a strong contrast of mood or idea in the two sections. It may be added that the Petrarchan sonnet, named after the Italian poet Petrarch, is not only the oldest but the strictest model.

Enamored Architect of Airy Rhyme	*T. B. Aldrich* (p. 63)
Tears	*Lizette W. Reese* (p. 89)
A Flower of Mullein	*Lizette W. Reese* (p. 90)
The Black Vulture	*George Sterling* (p. 103)
The Night of Gods	*George Sterling* (p. 103)
Sonnet	*Elinor Wylie* (p. 216)
Laughter and Death	*W. S. Blunt* (p. 292)
Estrangement	*William Watson* (p. 303)
Dreamers	*Siegfried Sassoon* (p. 396)
Sonnet	*Rupert Brooke* (p. 400)
The Soldier	*Rupert Brooke* (p. 403)
Two Sonnets	*C. H. Sorley* (p. 417)
To Germany	*C. H. Sorley* (p. 418)

Select from the above list those sonnets which seem to you to be (a) the Shakespearean model, (b) the Petrarchan model, (c) a combination of both. Which of these seem to you to be the most perfect in form? Certain critics claim that the Shakespearean sonnet lacks the dignity and architectural qualities of the "true" sonnet; William Sharp, however, has said, "The Shakespearean sonnet is like a red-hot bar being moulded upon a forge till — in the closing couplet — it receives a final clinching blow from the hammer." With whom do you agree?

Apart from the matter of *form*, which of these sonnets appeals most to you on the basis of what it says? Which one would you select as (a) the most vivid in description? (b) the most philosophic? (c) the loveliest as music? (d) the strongest in emotional effect? (e) the most sonorous in language?

Select three sonnets from some volume other than this one.

Compare them with three from the above list for (a) subject-matter, (b) variations in form, (c) skill in expression, (d) richness of language, or (e) possibility of permanence.

For those who wish to go further in their studies of this form, the literature of the past is crowded with sonnets. Besides the famous set of Shakespeare's, there are notable chains of sonnets (called "sequences") by Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and (in America) Arthur Davison Ficke, Edna St. Vincent Millay and William Ellery Leonard. Individual sonnets of great beauty have been written by many of the poets included in *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and *The Golden Treasury;* the following (to say nothing of Shakespeare's) having become classics of their kind:

The Parting	*Michael Drayton*
Death, be not proud	*John Donne*
When I consider how my light is spent	*John Milton*
How soon hath Time, the subtle thief	*John Milton*
Two Sonnets on the Sonnet	*William Wordsworth*
Earth has not anything to show more fair	*William Wordsworth*
The world is too much with us	*William Wordsworth*
Why art thou silent?	*William Wordsworth*
Ozymandias of Egypt	*Percy Bysshe Shelley*
Mysterious Night	*Joseph Blanco White*
On First Looking into Chapman's Homer	*John Keats*
The poetry of earth is never dead	*John Keats*
Bright star! Would I were steadfast	*John Keats*
Nature	*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Select three sonnets *not* mentioned in these lists. Choose the three from this or any other volume. Compare the three.

5. THE RONDEAU

"Behold, the rondeau — tasteful, light . . "

Of that division of fixed forms known as "French Forms," most airy and graceful ("tasteful, light" as Austin Dobson has termed it), the rondeau holds first favor. As intricate as it is precise, the rondeau is best suited to prettiness and persiflage, to the decorations of sentiment rather than to the profundities of emotion. Yet the two rondeaus reprinted in this collection are serious in purpose and moving in mood, one of them having become a classic of contemporary literature.

In After Days	*Austin Dobson* (p. 290)
In Flanders Fields	*John McCrae* (p. 346)

Analyze "In Flanders Fields." Can you show its accumulation of details? its gathering effect? Can you tell why these lines were quoted all over England and America, becoming the most famous poem produced by the war?

Reading these two poems can you discover the chief points they have in common *as a form?* Can you pick out the refrain? What is accomplished by the repetition of this refrain? Do you notice that the rhyme-scheme of both is identical: that each consists of thirteen lines written throughout on two rhymes? Both poems end with exactly the same words with which they begin. Is this true of all rondeaus?

Does the repetition (the "refrain") become monotonous or more emphatic in "In After Days"? Is the spiritual value of the poem destroyed by the "artificiality" of the mold in which it is cast? Could it be better rewritten as a "straight" poem? How?

Look up other examples of this form in other collections, such as Gleeson White's *Ballades, Rondeaus, Sestinas, etc.* and Helen Louise Cohen's *Lyric Forms From France: Their History and their Use.* Select your favorite and give reasons for your choice.

If you wish to pursue your studies in the sonnet, the rondeau and the development of the *technique* of poetry, you will find much to interest you in *The Forms of Poetry: A Dictionary of Verse.*

6. ROLLICKING RHYMES

"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the best of men."
Old Rhyme

Seein' Things	*Eugene Field* (p. 83)
Mia Carlotta	*T. A. Daly* (p. 117)
The Turning of the Babies in the Bed	*Paul Laurence Dunbar* (p. 119)
A Coquette Conquered	*Paul Laurence Dunbar* (p. 120)

Robinson Crusoe's Story . . . . *Charles E. Carryl* (p. 75)
The Sycophantic Fox and
  the Gullible Raven . . . . *Guy Wetmore Carryl* (p. 122)
Damming the Missouri . . . . *Arthur Guiterman* (p. 118)
Men . . . . *Dorothy E. Reid* (p. 258)
The Ballad of the *Billycock* . . . . *Anthony C. Deane* (p. 334)
The Grey Squirrel . . . . *Humbert Wolfe* (p. 393)

In spite of the gibes of journalists and the caricatures of cartoonists, poets are seldom as depicted: solemn individuals with long hair and longer faces. They can crack a smile (and even a joke) with the best of humorists, turn a sentence into a surprising whiplash-pun, retell an old tale with new and nonsensical variations — and the madder the measures the more we love them.

Seein' Things . . . . *Field* (p. 83)

Does the humor of this poem prevent it from seeming the record of a real experience? Which details are (a) the most broadly humorous? (b) the most calculated to rouse terror in a child? (c) the most skilful in presentation? Contrast this poem with "Jest 'fore Christmas," also by Field. What is the quality that has endeared both poems to oldsters as well as youngsters? Which is the more direct in its appeal? For what reasons?

Mia Carlotta . . . . *Daly* (p. 117)

T. A. Daly tells many a laughing legend. Read some of his others in *Yesterday and Today* or in his own volumes. What is his chief charm? In what way does he show his sympathetic insight with foreigners?

A Coquette Conquered . . . . *Dunbar* (p. 120)
The Turning of the Babies in the Bed . . . . *Dunbar* (p. 119)

Paul Laurence Dunbar supplies laughing negro legends in abundance. What is the special pleasure you feel in these poems? What means are used to bring out the sentiment beneath the humor?

Robinson Crusoe's Story . . . . *C. E. Carryl* (p. 75)
The Sycophantic Fox and the Gullible
  Raven . . . . *G. W. Carryl* (p. 122)

The Ballad of the *Billycock*	*Deane* (p. 334)
The Grey Squirrel	*Wolfe* (p. 393)

How do the first two poems differ from other "laughing legends" you have read? Do you find any similarity between "Robinson Crusoe's Story" and the nonsense rhymes in *Alice in Wonderland?* What relation, if any, can you discover? Which seems the more humorous to you? How do the third and fourth poems compare with the others in regard to humor and sympathetic treatment of character? Do you laugh with characters in the legends or at them? Which one is definitely ironic?

Damming the Missouri	*Guiterman* (p. 118)

Is this purely a humorous jingle? Does its "philosophy" gain or suffer from being cast in so light a key? What effect has the rhythm upon the central idea? What other verses equally brisk or light in tone can you find in this collection?

7. THE LYRIC

> "The universe rocks to the swing of a ballad,
> But it moves to a deeper and mightier mirth.
> Aye, without Song the bright world would be pallid —
> For the soul of a lyric's the heart of the earth!"

Song of the Open Road	*Walt Whitman* (p. 55)
Spicewood	*Lizette Woodworth Reese* (p. 90)
Ownership	*Lizette Woodworth Reese* (p. 91)
Spring Night	*Sara Teasdale* (p. 186)
Night Song at Amalfi	*Sara Teasdale* (p. 187)
Water Lilies	*Sara Teasdale* (p. 187)
Two Songs for Solitude	*Sara Teasdale* (p. 188)
The Eagle and the Mole	*Elinor Wylie* (p. 215)
Sunday Evening in the Common	*John Hall Wheelock* (p. 217)
Love and Liberation	*John Hall Wheelock* (p. 218)
God's World	*Edna St. Vincent Millay* (p. 237)
In Two Months Now	*George Dillon* (p. 267)
Reveillé	*A. E. Housman* (p. 309)
When I was One-and-Twenty	*A. E. Housman* (p. 310)
"On the Idle Hill of Summer"	*A. E. Housman* (p. 310)
The White Cascade	*W. H. Davies* (p. 337)
Crowns	*W. H. Davies* (p. 338)
The Barrel Organ	*Alfred Noyes* (p. 373)

Epilogue	*Alfred Noyes* (p. 378)
Love in Jeopardy	*Humbert Wolfe* (p. 394)
Lost Love	*Robert Graves* (p. 421)

If the poet is, first of all, the singer, the lyric (which is, above everything, the essence of song) will always be the form in which he expresses his richest and most rapturous emotions. Gay or sad, resigned or rebellious, the song outleaps — and outlives — schools, systems, philosophies. It is the nearest approach to music, that universal language, of which words are capable.

Which of the lyrics listed in this section strike you as (a) the most emotional? (b) closest to sheer music? (c) keenest in pictorial value? (d) most stirring and vigorous? (e) most varied in range? Select other lyrics from this collection. Compare any two not listed with two mentioned above. Which do you prefer, and why? Can there be such a thing as a lyric in free verse? Give a reason (or reasons) for your judgment. Give an example.

Song of the Open Road	*Whitman* (p. 55)

What quality has led the editor to place this poem among lyrics? Do you agree with his choice? Might "The Last Invocation," also by Whitman, be included here? What would *you* say is the true nature of the lyric?

Spicewood	*Reese* (p. 90)
Ownership	*Reese* (p. 91)

Have you ever seen the spicewood in spring? Would you know where to look for it from this poem? Why did the boy passing by "whistle afresh his foolish town-caught airs"? Do you usually think of the spring as the *young* of the year? Do you like the phrase "the white riot of the cherry tree"? Are there any other words or lines which attract you particularly? What has the lyric "Ownership" in common with "Spicewood"? What are its most memorable phrases? What is its general undercurrent of feeling? Which of Miss Reese's poems do you prefer?

Spring Night	*Teasdale* (p. 186)
Night Song at Amalfi	*Teasdale* (p. 187)
Water Lilies	*Teasdale* (p. 187)
Two Songs for Solitude	*Teasdale* (p. 188)

Which poem do you like best? Do you see that in each one you are given a glimpse into the poet's heart? Notice how much background the imagination suggests with the few simple lines of each poem. It is as if the poignancy of a whole story rich in character revelation and imagery were condensed into one flashing picture. Read the poems aloud and feel the emotional swing of the rhythm. Contrast these with poems of Sara Teasdale in some other collection. How do they compare?

The Eagle and the Mole .... *Wylie* (p. 215)

Could this be called a didactic lyric? Why? Which are the lines of greatest poetic quality? Which have the deepest "moralizing" force?

Sunday Evening in the Common .... *Wheelock* (p. 217)
Love and Liberation .... *Wheelock* (p. 218)

In "Sunday Evening in the Common" do you note the image of the stars as blossoms on the "topmost branches of the world"? What is the effect of this feeling of height on the buildings round about? Which word expresses the contrasting lowness of other things? Have you ever felt anything similar to that "one breathless moment" when the "city's moaning fades" and "there is no sound around the whole world's rim"? What is the effect of the line "So tawdry and so dear"? Compare the poem with Wordsworth's sonnet "Upon Westminster Bridge."

Does "Love and Liberation," a song of ecstasy, exaggerate the power of love? Is it true that if an abiding love is in the heart of man, he is the conqueror of all things? If it is not true, is it something that every lover wishes to believe in spite of every "reality"?

God's World .... *Millay* (p. 237)

Compare this poem with Sara Teasdale's "Spring Night" to determine the element of difference in the two poems. In what aspect are they alike? Has it any relation to Miss Millay's "Renascence"? What is the revelation with which both poems pulsate? Select particularly effective words or phrases.

When I Was One-and-Twenty .... *Housman* (p. 310)
Reveillé .... *Housman* (p. 309)
"On the Idle Hill of Summer" .... *Housman* (p. 310)

Try setting this song, "When I Was One-and-Twenty," to music. Why would it almost sing itself? Should the tune be gay or sad, or neither? Why? Sing one of Robert Burns' songs. Does the music fit the idea of the poem? Notice the title of this poem. Do you see anything particularly fitting about it? Do you think this would be an easy poem to memorize? Has this poem a message for boys or for girls, or for both? How — and in what way — does it compare to the two lyrics by W. H. Davies listed in this section? What are the chief differences?

Do you think this lyric, "Reveillé," would have any effect on a "sleepyhead"? Can you give the meaning of the first two stanzas? Why are these lines somewhat difficult to understand? What is the most arousing thing in the poem? Which stirs you most: the words or the idea?

Answer the last two questions in reference to "On the Idle Hill of Summer." Notice how quietly, almost silently, this poem begins, and how it expands. What gives it the quality of rising from repose to action?

The Barrel Organ .... *Noyes* (p. 373)
Epilogue .... *Noyes* (p. 378)

What is the particular charm of "The Barrel Organ"?

Do you think the ballad exaggerates the power of familiar music in the lines:

"A hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go."

Do the repetitions help it? Do you hear in it the insistence of the mechanical street-piano or hurdy-gurdy?

This poem (and, for that matter, all the others) should be read aloud to get the best effect of the music of the lines.

What is the germ-thought of the little love lyric "Epilogue"? Notice how lavish the poet is with his illustrations of the truth he is expressing. Which of these proofs do you think the most convincing? the most artistically expressed? the easiest to hold in the memory? Do you understand the meaning of "untranscended skies"?

Love in Jeopardy	*Wolfe* (p. 394)
Lost Love	*Graves* (p. 421)

Which of the two has the more subtle music? Which has the more unusual theme? Does Graves magnify the power of love more than Wolfe? Does he make his effects seem more or less actual by the exaggeration? Does the oddity of Wolfe's poem disturb the smoothness of the lines? Is the picture presented of something in the sunlight of reality or something remembered in a dream-world? Do you like the effect of Wolfe's slightly off-color "suspended rhymes" or do they bother you? Explain your conclusion.

Can you distinguish any marks of the masculine or the feminine hand in these poems of men and women respectively? Which lyric do you like best of all? Can you recite it by heart? Have you read other lyrics by these writers?

Read as many of the poems as possible aloud. Notice the different rhythmical quality of each. Remember that emotion tends to express itself rhythmically and that most songs are not long sustained. A lyric should be both poignant and brief. Which of these lyrics would make the most *instant* appeal to anyone?

8. POETRY AS COLOR AND IMAGE

> " . . . The poet paints
> With neither brush nor pigment; yet he spreads
> His canvases of colored words."

Solitaire	*Amy Lowell* (p. 134)
Meeting-House Hill	*Amy Lowell* (p. 135)
Prayers of Steel	*Carl Sandburg* (p. 151)
Fog	*Carl Sandburg* (p. 151)
From "Smoke and Steel"	*Carl Sandburg* (p. 152)
Jazz Fantasia	*Carl Sandburg* (p. 154)
Three Cinquains	*Adelaide Crapsey* (p. 157)
Oread	*H. D. (Hilda Doolittle)* (p. 206)
Heat	*H. D.* (p. 206)
Pear Tree	*H. D.* (p. 207)
Ars Poetica	*Archibald MacLeish* (p. 246)
Images	*Richard Aldington* (p. 409)
Interlude	*Edith Sitwell* (p. 414)

Poetry must appeal to the senses. It compels us to see, hear, feel, smell, imaginatively. It is interesting to consider some of the pictorial (and more unusual) aspects of modern verse.

Solitaire	*Lowell*	(p. 134)
Meeting-House Hill	*Lowell*	(p. 135)

Notice that "Solitaire" is largely a series of pictures: streets with uneven roofs; odd, blue Chinese gardens; pagan temples with broken flutings of white pillars; purple and yellow crocus wreaths; drenched grasses; bedrooms with the candles out. Is the picture presented actual or fantastic? Is the poet revealed?

Notice the series of pictures in the poem, "Meeting-House Hill." Can you discover the rhythmical beats which fall irregularly through the unrhymed lines?

Prayers of Steel	*Sandburg*	(p. 151)
Fog	*Sandburg*	(p. 151)
From "Smoke and Steel"	*Sandburg*	(p. 152)
Jazz Fantasia	*Sandburg*	(p. 154)

Which poem seems to you to be the most pictorial in quality? Which the richest in tone? Which the most vivid?

In "Prayers of Steel" what is the idea back of the symbol of crowbar and spike? What does the picture of old walls and old foundations versus a great skyscraper suggest? What do you call the kind of people who would cling to the moldering wall and the rotting foundation?

Do you like the suggestion of fog's coming on "little cat feet"? What word in the next group of lines carries the image further?

Is the idea in "Smoke and Steel" new to you? Does it appeal to you or not? Are there any lines you do not understand? Which? Which lines do you like best?

Does "Jazz Fantasia" seem vivid or, as one of its critics has said, "merely noisy"? Can you hear the *different* elements in jazz, which is having so profound an influence on modern music? Can you detect in a piece of jazz like Gershwin's brilliant "Rhapsody in Blue" (as in this poem) the tender and lingering phrases as well as the loud ones? Which are they in Sandburg's poem?

Three Cinquains .... *Crapsey* (p. 157)

See how pictures are suggested in each line even when the line is only one word long. Does the form seem to gain or lose because of its brevity?

Make a list of other poems which you think are strongly pictorial in quality. Point out the central "picture" or "color" in each.

Oread .... *H. D.* (p. 206)
Heat .... *H. D.* (p. 206)
Pear Tree .... *H. D.* (p. 207)

Read these poems for pictorial quality. Which do you like best? What is the peculiar quality of each poem? of the three as a group? Does the central image of "Oread" explain why its author became the leader of the Imagists? Which "image" is the most vivid? the most fantastic? the nearest to reality?

Ars Poetica .... *MacLeish* (p. 246)

Do you notice how the author intensifies the power of poetry by his images and comparisons? Which of these stanzas is the most convincing? Do you know another poem about poetry? Have you ever read O'Shaughnessy's famous "Ode"?

Images .... *Aldington* (p. 409)
Interlude .... *Sitwell* (p. 414)

Notice how the idea is driven home solely through a series of pictures, especially in the second piece. Is it good psychology to make a point in this way? Does the accumulation of images increase or mar the total effect? Why? Which image, in the poem by Aldington, is the richest? the most natural? the most remote or artificial?

9. MODERN POETRY AND THE MODERN STUDENT

"And what is this world — and the glad world's best —
But the heart of a child at its happiest!"

Why, it has been asked often enough, should we turn to this, the worst of all possible times, and pay attention to the queer ideas of modern poets instead of listening only to the reassuring bards of the past? The answers are various. It might be offered that young readers (like ninety per cent of the human race) are so perverse that what may seem "queer" to the academic mind is an ordinary and natural phenomenon to them. Far from realizing that this is "a world of ruin and revolution," blithely ignorant of tendencies and "movements," the child has a clarity of instinct which prevents him from confusing poetry and — let me say — propaganda. This, I add in a whisper, is more than can be said for most critics.

A particularly telling instance lies at hand. About eight years ago there appeared a tiny poem of ten lines entitled, innocently enough, "The Tree." It was a miniature witty fable, a scrap of philosophy in foolscap. But it happened to be published during the free verse furore and its author happened to be the leader of a group of experimentalists which called itself "Others." For months this unassuming fancy was made the butt of wholesale ridicule; reputable professors and eminent journalists jeered at it, parodied its syllables, exposed its "anarchy" and quoted its phrases as examples of "bedlam poetry." In short, it became the red flag waved as a "Stop! Look! Listen!" warning to a whole generation. I quote Alfred Kreymborg's famous humoresque in its entirety:

I am four monkeys.
One hangs from a limb,
Tail-wise,
chattering at the earth;
another is cramming his belly with cocoanut;
the third is up in the top branches,
quizzing the sky;
and the fourth —
he's chasing another monkey. . .
How many monkeys are you?

Children were the only ones who were never disturbed by this poem — except when they were disturbed by the spontaneous laughter which the author intended. They realized, without being told, that every one of us has not only two but multiple personalities; that there are days when one merely loafs and hangs about "tail-wise from a limb," that there are hours when we are merely hunters of food, that there is a poet "quizzing the sky" in each of us. . . . In short, the mind of the untrained reader responded to the spirit of this whimsicality far more quickly than any body of technicians would believe.

And it is because modern poetry (or at least a great part of it) establishes a *direct* contact with young interests that the growing child, intent on Here and Now, turns to it so readily. One reason for this appeal is the subject-matter of most contemporary verse. So much of it is concerned with the child's own world, with things of everyday, that it is no longer difficult to make a selection of verse (serious, light or downright frivolous) which will elicit instant appreciation from any group.

Choose the six poems in this volume which would make the most instant appeal to the average child. Choose six others which would wake a response from the *unusual* child. Give reasons for your choice in both cases. Do you consider *A Child's Garden of Verses* as enjoyable to the child of today as to the youngster of the generation for which it was written? Do you think De la Mare's *Peacock Pie* or Milne's *When We Were Very Young* (a) its inferior? (b) its equal? (c) its superior as a book for juveniles?

Water	*Conkling* (p. 269)
Hay-Cock	*Conkling* (p. 269)
I Keep Wondering	*Conkling* (p. 270)
The Janitor's Boy	*N. Crane* (p. 271)
The Proposals	*N. Crane* (p. 272)

The first three poems were written by Hilda Conkling between the ages of eight and ten; the last two were written by Nathalia Crane at the age of fourteen. What are the principal features of the two sets of poems as (a) compared with one another? (b) opposed to each other? Read the introductory notes to each of these young authors and see if their backgrounds or interests account in any way for the poetry they have written. Do you prefer Nathalia Crane's more humorous and skipping verses in *The Janitor's Boy* to the later work in this volume?

Look through *Creative Youth* — if you can locate a copy of that delightful volume. This is an anthology of poems (serious and the contrary) written by students of The Lincoln School. Do you think the verses considerably above those in the average high-school magazine or not? If you do think so, give reasons for your opinion. Also tell (after reading Mr. Mearns' preface) why every child is an instinctive lover as well as a possible creator of poetry. Has such an anthology as *Creative Youth* ever been attempted in your school?

There are countless collections for young readers graded from the nursery age to the late teens. Among those which have proved most successful as reference and research material are: *The Home Book of Verse for Young Folks*, *Golden Numbers*, *The Listening Child*, *Poems for Youth*, *Yesterday and Today*, *Open Gates*, *This Singing World*, *High School Poems*, and (though its final appeal is to a somewhat more mature audience) Walter De la Mare's sensitively edited *Come Hither*.

PART II

1. THE HIGH HEART

Poems of "ecstasy and exaltation."

From "Song of Myself"	*Walt Whitman* (p. 50)
I Hear America Singing	*Walt Whitman* (p. 54)
Song of the Open Road	*Walt Whitman* (p. 55)
Miracles	*Walt Whitman* (p. 56)
Chartless	*Emily Dickinson* (p. 59)
Suspense	*Emily Dickinson* (p. 60)
Mysteries	*Emily Dickinson* (p. 61)
The Man With the Hoe	*Edwin Markham* (p. 85)
The Wild Ride	*Louise Imogen Guiney* (p. 94)
Unmanifest Destiny	*Richard Hovey* (p. 99)
Renascence	*Edna St. Vincent Millay* (p. 238)
Brighton Beach	*Virginia Moore* (p. 266)
Recessional	*Rudyard Kipling* (p. 327)
A Consecration	*John Masefield* (p. 358)
Sonnet	*Rupert Brooke* (p. 400)
The Great Lover	*Rupert Brooke* (p. 401)
Apologia Pro Poemate Meo	*Wilfred Owen* (p. 412)
Ploughman at the Plough	*Louis Golding* (p. 422)

We are all creatures of emotional variations. Sometimes ecstasy lifts us, sometimes despondency drags us down, sometimes flat indifference holds us. This group of poems reflects different moods which may help interpret life to those who read.

Chartless . . . . *Dickinson* (p. 59)
Suspense . . . . *Dickinson* (p. 60)
Mysteries . . . . *Dickinson* (p. 61)

Read the introductory note to Emily Dickinson's poems. What is the dominating quality of each of the three poems listed above? What phrases reveal the poet's gift of epigram? Contrast these with other poems by Emily Dickinson. What are the chief differences? What is the most ecstatic poem you ever read?

The Man With the Hoe. . . . . *Markham* (p. 85)

What important question for the world to answer lies in the poem? Notice how much meaning is condensed in the lines:

"... dead to rapture and despair.
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes."

Why is such a being dangerous? What do you understand by "a protest that is also prophecy"? Is the language used in this poem the speech of everyday? What "heightens" it?

The Wild Ride. . . . . *Guiney* (p. 94)

Do you find it easy to see the pictures suggested in the poem? In which lines? What view of life does the poem present? Discuss the high note of courage in the lines:

"Thou leadest, O God!
All's well with thy troopers that follow."

In what other lines do you find the same tone of valor?

Brighton Beach. . . . . *Moore* (p. 266)

What gives these lines their swift movement? What special passages make us feel the buoyance and gaiety of the poet? What, besides the joy of physical activity, makes the poet's mood so infectiously happy? Note the keen vigor of phrases like:

Today we will run
Crazily into the camp of the sun!

What else in this poem helps you to share the poet's own delight? Have you ever felt this intensity of communication with the elements?

Renascence . . . . *Millay* (p. 238)

Notice the simplicity of form, the wealth of imagery, the richness of illustration. Trace the steps by which we are led into a sympathetic understanding of selfishness, of suffering, of contrition. What passages make you realize the poet's close connection with all that breathes and struggles and gropes upward? What part expresses the core of the poem? What is the climax? What is the essence of the conclusion: "The world stands out on either side. . . ." Which part affects you most deeply? Select lines which you want to remember.

Recessional . . . . *Kipling* (p. 327)

"Recessional" strikes a response in us because it excites a realization of our own "frantic boast and foolish word." "Lest we forget" becomes a personal prayer and for that reason a bit of personal philosophy. Is a preachment of this kind more effective in verse than in prose? Why? Or why not? This poem was inspired by Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Can you detect evidences of the occasion in the poem? Do you think it took courage for Kipling to write it? Why?

A Consecration . . . . *Masefield* (p. 358)

What is the theme of this poem? What ideal does it suggest? What does the poem have in common with those in the group, *Social Conscience?* Do you know any classic poem which expresses this same idea?

Sonnet . . . . *Brooke* (p. 400)
The Great Lover . . . . *Brooke* (p. 401)

"Sonnet" makes certain demands upon the reader's power to see images. What do the first line and a half suggest? Can you picture the shade, the loneliness and mire of the last land, with the patient lover waiting? Can you feel the cool wind blowing, see the light and hear the dead trembling, when the vigil is over? Can you picture the loved one, broad-browed, smiling, bringing light to the darkness? Do you catch the blending in the last two lines of earthly and phantom qualities?

Notice the mood of almost pessimism in the first few lines of

"The Great Lover." See the change of mood in the succeeding lines. Try to sense the variety and unrelatedness of the myriad things he loved. Would a more orderly arrangement have been better? Does the poem seem to make life worth living? What actual *things* and sensations appeal most to you? Could you make a poem of such "things loved"? Do you see any similarity of thought between this poem and Léonie Adams' "April Immortality"? Have you been conscious of the rhythm or of the rhyme scheme in this poem?

Apologia Pro Poemate Meo.................. *Owen* (p. 412)

Can you translate this Latin title into English? In what sense is the poem an "apology"? What is the leading thought of the verses? The central emotion? Compare the poem with Siegfried Sassoon's "The Rear-Guard." What are the similarities — and the differences — in thought and expression? Choose details to show the poets' horror of war.

Ploughman at the Plough.................. *Golding* (p. 422)

Louis Golding has seized something of the stark vigor of labor in this poem. Compare it with some poem in the group *The New Realism.* Or in the group *Social Conscience.* Remember that the poet has written in the form which he thinks best suited to his thought. What is the effect on the thought of this couplet form?

From "Song of Myself".................. *Whitman* (p. 50)
I Hear America Singing.................. *Whitman* (p. 54)
Song of the Open Road.................. *Whitman* (p. 55)

What have these three poems in common? What would you say has led the editor to group them under the section "The High Heart"? From these poems can you derive any sense of Walt Whitman's personality?

What is the chief spiritual emphasis of these poems? Which of the three contains most of it? Select fragments or passages which best illustrate the spirit of (a) courage, (b) faith, (c) humor, (d) freedom, (e) "sense of universality."

In the foreword the editor has said that, to the technician, Whitman's chief contribution is his liberation of "form." He has been hailed as "the father of the free verse movement."

Do you think you can pick out the salient characteristics of his "free form"? Would you say that his influence in this way has been for good or bad? What does the editor mean when he speaks of Whitman's "tidal rhythms"? Can you name any poems in this or any other volume which seem to have been influenced by Whitman?

Miracles.............................*Whitman* (p. 56)

Knowing Whitman's other work, would you have recognized this poem as by the same author if it had not borne his signature? What has it that unites it with the others? This poem contains a set of "facts." Which do you think the most illuminating? This listing of scenes and objects is a characteristic of Whitman and is one that has been much criticized. Do you think it adds effectiveness to the central idea? Would it gain in effect if the "catalogue" were longer? Can you name any other common things which might fit in this category as "miracles"?

2. THE GREEN WORLD

"And Youth and April Weather
In ecstasy are seen
To rise and dance together —
Green in a world of green."

Indian Summer	*Emily Dickinson* (p. 59)
A Flower of Mullein	*Lizette Woodworth Reese* (p. 90)
Wild Cherry	*Lizette Woodworth Reese* (p. 91)
Blue-Butterfly Day	*Robert Frost* (p. 144)
Birches	*Robert Frost* (p. 145)
The Passing Glimpse	*Robert Frost* (p. 148)
Spring Night	*Sara Teasdale* (p. 186)
Stand With Me Here	*Louis Untermeyer* (p. 196)
Pear Tree	*H. D.* (p. 207)
Origin	*Virginia Moore* (p. 265)
In Two Months Now	*George Dillon* (p. 267)
In the Wood of Finvara	*Arthur Symons* (p. 314)
Days Too Short	*W. H. Davies* (p. 337)
A Greeting	*W. H. Davies* (p. 338)
There Blooms No Bud in May	*Walter De la Mare* (p. 350)
Winter Field	*A. E. Coppard* (p. 366)
Stone Trees	*John Freeman* (p. 384)
Song	*W. J. Turner* (p. 407)

Possibly fifty per cent of the world's poetry is what has been called "nature poetry." From the time of the earliest Anglo-Saxon writers, English literature has been especially rich in reflections of "clean earth and cleaner sky," of "meadows, meres and mountains." There is, however, one striking difference between the nature poetry of today and that of the immediate past. From fifty to seventy-five years ago even the best American poets were prone to decorate their idyllic verses with "lessons"; they were all too fond of adding to an otherwise charming bit of description a heavy — and usually irrelevant — moral. (See "The Chambered Nautilus" by Holmes, "To a Waterfowl" by Bryant, "The Rhodora" by Emerson, and others.) Compare those of today.

There are certain features which one can find in all the poems listed in this section. Can you name some of them? Which poem comes closest to "moralizing"? Which poem would you select as being closest to Nature itself? For what reason? Which poem makes its appeal because of its (a) descriptive power? (b) imagination? (c) music? (d) emotional communication? (e) utter simplicity of speech? Select other poems of this type from this (or any other) collection and compare them with each other. State why you prefer them — if you do.

A Flower of Mullein	*Reese* (p. 90)
Wild Cherry	*Reese* (p. 91)

In what way does the poet make familiar things take on the quality of "strangeness"? What phrases seem to you to bring out "the glory of the commonplace"? What form are both of these poems written in?

Blue-Butterfly Day	*Frost* (p. 144)
Birches	*Frost* (p. 145)
The Passing Glimpse	*Frost* (p. 148)

Robert Frost is known chiefly for his monologs and precise delineations of New England characters. The editor believes, however, that fifty years from now he will be esteemed principally because of his lyrics. "Blue-Butterfly Day" condenses his quality. What would you say is its outstanding feature? "Birches" might be called a nature lyric in blank verse. Some critics have found it difficult to tell where "the realism leaves off and the play of imagination begins." What is your opinion? Can you detect the underlying philosophy? Where does it become plainest? Is "The Passing Glimpse" in any way related to it? Why might this be called a philosophic lyric?

In Two Months Now	*Dillon*	(p. 267)
In the Wood of Finvara	*Symons*	(p. 314)
Days Too Short	*Davies*	(p. 337)
A Greeting	*Davies*	(p. 338)
There Blooms No Bud in May	*De la Mare*	(p. 350)
Stone Trees	*Freeman*	(p. 384)
Song	*Turner*	(p. 407)

The first of these poems is by a young American; all the rest are by living English poets. Do you detect any differences between the nature poetry written on this side of the Atlantic and that produced in the countryside of England? What are they? Do you think it true that Davies and the other bucolic poets write "with a birdlike artlessness"? Which poem would be the one you would care to memorize? Which would you select as a lyric to be set to music? Give reasons for your selection.

What do you consider the finest "nature poem" you ever read? Where did you find it? Can you quote it?

3. THE POET AS A SOLDIER

> "Soldiers are dreamers: when the guns begin
> They think of firelit homes . . ."

On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines	*William V. Moody*	(p. 101)
I Have a Rendezvous with Death	*Alan Seeger*	(p. 226)
In Flanders Fields	*John McCrae*	(p. 346)
Dreamers	*Siegfried Sassoon*	(p. 396)
The Rear-Guard	*Siegfried Sassoon*	(p. 397)
Aftermath	*Siegfried Sassoon*	(p. 398)
The Soldier	*Rupert Brooke*	(p. 403)
Sportsmen in Paradise	*T. P. C. Wilson*	(p. 405)
Nearer	*Robert Nichols*	(p. 411)
Apologia Pro Poemate Meo	*Wilfred Owen*	(p. 412)
Anthem for Doomed Youth	*Wilfred Owen*	(p. 413)
To Germany	*C. H. Sorley*	(p. 418)
It's a Queer Time	*Robert Graves*	(p. 419)

The poet's reaction to the war is, naturally, dependent upon his attitude toward it as a human being. He may be among the first to join the colors; he may, on the other hand, be equally loyal to the ideals of his country when he opposes the continuation of a war which he considers debasing. Show the different points of view in the poems listed above. Take three of them as typical of the poets' attitude. Do you get a vivid sense of personality through them? Which poems would you select as revealing (a) uncritical patriotism? (b) high vision? (c) horror? (d) determination to end war? (e) tolerance of the enemy? (f) humor in the face of terror? (g) criticism of the aims of war? Which says most to you in the least space? How?

Aftermath.............................*Sassoon* (p. 398)

This poem is said to summarize Sassoon's work. It also summarizes the post-war feeling of many soldiers. Can you express that feeling in a paragraph? What are the lines which most vividly summon the past? What are the lines which look prophetically toward the future?

Contrast this poem with "In Flanders Fields." What is the vital difference? Which shows the results of greater war-experience? Which do you prefer, apart from its "message"? Explain why. Which poem do you think will say more to us twenty years from now?

Apologia Pro Poemate Meo..................*Owen* (p. 412)
Anthem for Doomed Youth ....*Owen* (p. 413)

Although Owen's sense of outrage against war is quieter than Sassoon's, do you think it is less deep? What are the passages which most clearly illuminate the depth of this passion? Do you regard his speaking up against war as cowardly? Read the introductory note to his poems. What do you think he hoped to accomplish? Why is the second poem entitled "Anthem"?

It's a Queer Time........................*Graves* (p. 419)

In what does this poem differ radically from other war-poems? What has it in common with Graves' less warlike lines? Contrast this with Alan Seeger's celebrated lines. Which do you think will last longer? Why?

4. LAUREATES OF THE HOME

"Man may work from sun to sun,
But woman's work is never done."

The Monk in the Kitchen	*Anna Hempstead Branch* (p. 129)
A Decade	*Amy Lowell* (p. 136)
Autumn	*Jean Starr Untermeyer* (p. 198)
Mrs. Winkelsteiner	*Dorothy E. Reid* (p. 258)
Domestic Economy	*Anna Wickham* (p. 389)

The Monk in the Kitchen.................. *Branch* (p. 129)

Select the lines in the poem which seem to you to glorify humble, home-keeping acts. What points of similarity can you find between the central thought of this poem ("Whoever makes a thing more bright, He is an angel of all light") and the conclusion of Langston Hughes' "Brass Spittoons"?

Compare this poem with "Autumn" by Jean Starr Untermeyer. Which poem do you think would appeal most to a young home-maker? Why?

Autumn .... *J. S. Untermeyer* (p. 198)

Notice how this poem begins in a purely descriptive vein and ends in a tensely emotional key. How is this accomplished? Why is the blend of keen (and even whimsical) observation and almost religious ecstasy so effective? Note the power and exactness of epithet in such a phrase as "How memory *cuts* away the years." Can you find other instances? Do you know (or would you care to write) another poem which takes some ordinary detail of housekeeping and makes an exalted ritual out of it?

Try reading both poems to your mother, or some other experienced housekeeper. Read them also to some careless housekeeper you happen to know. Try to get opinions from both.

What spiritual fact ennobles the most menial of tasks described in the poems listed? What have the verses of Anna Hempstead Branch and Jean Starr Untermeyer (as well as the end of Langston Hughes') in common with George Herbert's lines:

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

Mrs. Winkelsteiner .... *Reid* (p. 258)

The Italians, the negroes and certain other races are said to be spontaneously happy because they sing while they work. Why is song so stimulating a tonic? Why does all the world love not only a lover but a singer? Why in this poem does the writer miss the old lady who used to sell her the farm-produce? Does the whimsical tone of the verses detract from or add to the underlying pathos of the poem? Has it anything in common with Dorothy E. Reid's poem "Men"? If so, what?

Domestic Economy .... *Wickham* (p. 389)

Here you have an Englishwoman's reaction to the duties of a housekeeper. Do you know of any other poems which deal with the same general topic as the poems in this group?

5. SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

"He liveth best who loveth best
All things both great and small."

Columbus	*Joaquin Miller* (p. 72)
The Man With the Hoe	*Edwin Markham* (p. 85)
Brotherhood	*Edwin Markham* (p. 87)
Caliban in the Coal Mines	*Louis Untermeyer* (p. 193)
Summons	*Louis Untermeyer* (p. 194)
On the Birth of a Child	*Louis Untermeyer* (p. 195)
Prayer	*Louis Untermeyer* (p. 197)
Invictus	*W. E. Henley* (p. 297)
A Consecration	*John Masefield* (p. 358)

Columbus .... *Miller* (p. 72)

This is obviously a poem with a "lesson." Yet what it teaches has both a personal as well as a historic value. In what way can you apply it to yourself? Would the moral be as plain if the last four lines were omitted? Would such an omission spoil or improve the poem?

Do you see why this poem should be included in this group? Would this story be as effective in prose as in verse? Which lines appeal particularly to you?

The Man With the Hoe	*Markham* (p. 85)
Brotherhood	*Markham* (p. 87)

"This poem . . . caught up, with a prophetic vibrancy, the passion for social justice that was waiting to be intensified in poetry. Markham summed up and spiritualized the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience." Read the rest of the section in the Preface entitled "Interim 1890–1912."

In "The Man With the Hoe," select the lines which make you see most clearly the possibilities of greatness in man. Which make you feel most keenly "man's inhumanity to man"? Is there a note of hope in the poem? Where? How does the poem illustrate the statement that Markham had a social conscience? In what way is the idea of the poem condensed and pointed in "Brotherhood"?

Caliban in the Coal Mines	*Untermeyer* (p. 193)
Summons	*Untermeyer* (p. 194)
On the Birth of a Child	*Untermeyer* (p. 195)
Prayer	*Untermeyer* (p. 197)

Which lines most arouse your sympathy in "Caliban"? What glimpse does "Summons" give you into the heart of a boy? Which lines in "Summons" reflect the theme of "Prayer"? Do you see any connection between the thought in "Summons" and that in "On the Birth of a Child"? Some critics have considered "Prayer" an agnostic and irreligious utterance; yet many ministers have used it in their pulpits. What is your opinion? Is it a gesture of despairing disbelief or a cry for deeper faith? Why has this poem been called "a challenge"? What, if anything, is courageous about it?

Invictus	*Henley* (p. 297)

"Art, he knew, could not be separated from the dreams and hungers of man; it could not flourish only on its own essences and technical accomplishments. To live, poetry would have to share the fears, angers, hopes, and struggles of the prosaic world." How are these sentences concerning Henley related to "Invictus"?

Do you detect the sympathy with struggling humankind in the poem? Compare it with Markham's "The Man With the Hoe" and Untermeyer's "Prayer" in regard to its appeal. Has this poem any special "call" for boys?

A Consecration . . . . *Masefield* (p. 358)

What are the passages which reveal the poet's "social conscience" as well as his social consciousness? Is it stirring in the same way as Henley's? What does it add to "Caliban in the Coal Mines"?

6. VAGABONDIA

"Off with the fetters
That chafe and restrain,
Off with the chain!
Here Art and Letters
Blithely combine.
Here we are free —
Free as the wind is,
Free as the sea,
Free!"

A Vagabond Song	*Bliss Carman* (p. 95)
Hem and Haw	*Bliss Carman* (p. 96)
Daisies	*Bliss Carman* (p. 97)
At the Cross Roads	*Richard Hovey* (p. 98)
Unmanifest Destiny	*Richard Hovey* (p. 99)
A Stein Song	*Richard Hovey* (p. 100)
Brighton Beach	*Virginia Moore* (p. 266)
Sea-Fever	*John Masefield* (p. 359)
Romance	*W. J. Turner* (p. 406)

The vagabond spirit in all of us has different manifestations. To some the call of high hills is irresistible; to others "the salt surge of the sea" is the most potent. But for each of us there is always something in the outdoors which can light a "fire in our heels."

A Vagabond Song	*Carman* (p. 95)
Hem and Haw	*Carman* (p. 96)
Daisies	*Carman* (p. 97)

How is the vagabond spirit expressed in each of these poems? Compare one of these poems with one of Richard Hovey's to discover why these two men enjoyed writing together.

At the Crossroads	*Hovey* (p. 98)
Unmanifest Destiny	*Hovey* (p. 99)
A Stein Song	*Hovey* (p. 100)
Brighton Beach	*Moore* (p. 266)
Sea-Fever	*Masefield* (p. 359)

Which lines in the poems referred to seem to you to sing most gaily the song of freedom? Which poem do you like best? Why? What do you do when the wanderlust seizes you? Where do you prefer to go?

John Masefield also belonged to the "Vagabondia" group. Read the biographical notes, pages 357-358, to see how far Masefield lived out his theories of freedom. Read in his own volume (or some other anthology) his "A Wanderer's Song" and "The West Wind" as beautiful examples of other poems in this refreshing spirit.

Read "Sea-Fever" (p. 359). Do you know the sea well enough to respond to "the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea gulls crying"? Compare "Sea-Fever" with Bliss Carman's "Autumn" in regard to the strength of its appeal to you. Which poem do you think would appeal most to an inland-bred boy or girl?

Romance	*Turner* (p. 406)

Although not directly a poem of wanderlust, why are these verses placed in this section? Why has the poet, when a boy, fallen in love with far-off places? Is it the mere spell of the words, the romantic sound of the curious syllables which awakes his longing and sends him dreaming about the streets? Have words in themselves ever given you a similar sensation?

7. PEOPLE OF ALL KINDS

"It takes all kinds of people to make a world."
Old Proverb

Jim Bludso	*John Hay* (p. 64)
Columbus	*Joaquin Miller* (p. 72)
An Old Story	*E. A. Robinson* (p. 108)
The Wayfarer	*Stephen Crane* (p. 114)
An Old Man's Winter Night	*Robert Frost* (p. 147)
The Eagle that is Forgotten	*Vachel Lindsay* (p. 160)
The Patient to the Doctors	*Witter Bynner* (p. 172)
Sometimes	*Thomas S. Jones, Jr.* (p. 173)
Martin	*Joyce Kilmer* (p. 219)
Portrait of a Boy	*S. V. Benét* (p. 252)
When I was One-and-Twenty	*A. E. Housman* (p. 310)
The Song of the Old Mother	*William B. Yeats* (p. 316)
Old Susan	*Walter De la Mare* (p. 349)
The Plougher	*Padraic Colum* (p. 379)
The Old Woman	*Joseph Campbell* (p. 380)
The Bugler	*F. W. Harvey* (p. 404)
Lone Dog	*Irene R. McLeod* (p. 409)
Neglectful Edward	*Robert Graves* (p. 420)
The Singer of High State	*Louis Golding* (p. 423)

Which four of the poems listed in this section give you the most vivid sense of the person described? Which gives you the keenest sense of the *poet's* personality? Which of the characters described in these poems seems to you the most (a) serious and intense? (b) light-hearted? (c) imaginative? (d) heroic? (e) unreal? (f) poetic? (g) legendary? Which appeals to you generally as a human being? Which one is the least likable?

An Old Man's Winter Night . . . . *Frost* (p. 147)

Besides the picture of a man, does this poem give you the picture of a background? What are its salient characteristics? What are the phrases which communicate a sense of age in (a) the man? (b) the house? What particular line seems the most revealing? Why?

Do you believe that anything in sharpness and concentration is gained by putting these portraits into a poetic form? Is condensation in itself an advantage? Could you take one of these characters and expand him and his backgrounds into a short story? Take another character from the poems listed here and tell the story of what happened *before* the poem — in other words, give a history or a background which might explain the character as described by the poet.

Choose certain phrases which most directly bring out the qualities of the persons described. Select, for example, Kilmer's "Martin" or McLeod's "Lone Dog" and show the dominating traits as well as the general effect of the entire poem.

An Old Story	*Robinson*	(p. 108)
Portrait of a Boy	*Benét*	(p. 252)
The Plougher	*Colum*	(p. 379)

Take these three characters — or the poets who have described them — as three entirely different types. Contrast them, showing the different point of view of each. Notice how, in the first of the three, the story itself is suggested; how, in the second, the imagination of the character is displayed by the type of his dream; how, in the third, the figure of the laborer is etched against the sunset, the savage earth, the Gaelic gods, and the slow-falling darkness. Bring out other details which intensify these three portraits.

If you were able to meet any of these people in actual life, whom would you prefer to know? Explain your choice. Which is your favorite character (a) in fiction? (b) in poetry? (c) in drama? (d) in history? What are the ideals or the leading motives they symbolize?

8. THE MELTING POT

"I hear America singing . . .
Each in his own voice I hear."

I Hear America Singing	*Walt Whitman*	(p. 54)
From "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"	*Walt Whitman*	(p. 55)
"When the Frost is on the Punkin"	*James Whitcomb Riley*	(p. 80)
The Song of the Thrush	*T. A. Daly*	(p. 116)
Mia Carlotta	*T. A. Daly*	(p. 117)
The Turning of the Babies in the Bed	*Paul Laurence Dunbar*	(p. 119)
A Coquette Conquered	*Paul Laurence Dunbar*	(p. 120)
The Valley That God Forgot	*H. H. Knibbs*	(p. 127)
The Congo	*Vachel Lindsay*	(p. 162)
Homesick Blues	*Langston Hughes*	(p. 260)
From the Dark Tower	*Countee Cullen*	(p. 263)

What is the message contained in the two poems which head this section? Compare these with Whitman's other poems and see if you find any similarities. What are the outstanding features?

"When the Frost is on the Punkin" .... *Riley* (p. 80)

James Whitcomb Riley gives the dialect of the uneducated farmhand or farmer. This poetic insight into the nature of one lover of things simple always awakens interest in the untutored mind. City dwellers have often taken to themselves a certain feeling of superiority because they have been brought up on the artificial conveniences of life in a town. The country boy frequently wins in the race for success because he has been accustomed to the harsh, uncompromising struggle with nature. Or do you disagree? Do you know any other poems which treat of the same type of character, or different type with the same background? Have you been conscious of the rhythm of this poem?

The Song of the Thrush .... *Daly* (p. 116)
Mia Carlotta .... *Daly* (p. 117)

Young people are often inclined to ridicule foreign-born citizens. Sympathetic treatment in literature often makes for better understanding of the gifts new Americans bring with them. Try writing either in verse or prose a similar word-picture of some such character you may know or imagine. It has been said that "we are all brothers under the skin." Do you believe it? Do you know any other poems which bring out the idea of the brotherhood of man?

The Turning of the Babies in the Bed .... *Dunbar* (p. 119)
A Coquette Conquered .... *Dunbar* (p. 120)

The negro has received extended treatment at the hands of Dunbar. Dunbar "studied the American negro objectively and presented him as he found him." Can you add any interesting detail of negro qualities as you have observed them? Do you think these two little studies of character could be as well given in prose as in verse?

The Valley That God Forgot................*Knibbs* (p. 127)

H. H. Knibbs treats another type of American — the Western cowboy. Are men like Davison in the poem usually superstitious? Did the townspeople believe that the phantom friends had made the well? Give the lines supporting your belief. What do you understand by:

> "Time and the times have tamed it,
> His yarn — and this desert spot."

The Congo............................*Lindsay* (p. 162)

". . . Lindsay has been tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto and, above all, by the curiously syncopated music that characterizes the black man in America."

What idea does this poem give you of negro characteristics? Which seems the more vital element: the idea of the poem or the way in which the idea is expressed? Have you read Stribling's novel, *Birthright?* It is the story of a young negro Harvard graduate who went back to his native Southern village eager to serve and help his people. Is "The Congo," in essence, a religious or merely a vigorously orchestral poem? Select the phrases that indicate a deep religious feeling. What makes you realize that the picture presented is characteristic of only a small part of the negroes in America?

Homesick Blues........................*Hughes* (p. 260)
From the Dark Tower ....*Cullen* (p. 263)

Both of these poems were written by young negroes, and both present certain racial similarities and strong differences in treatment. Can you name one or two of these? Would you know at once that "From the Dark Tower" was written by a negro even though you had not been informed of the fact? Contrast this poem with "Brass Spittoons" by Langston Hughes. What elements have the two in common? In which poem does indignation predominate? In which does a passion for beauty surmount the lines?

Read the introductory note to the poems by Langston Hughes. The poet maintains that "the mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh." Have you ever heard any *Blues* sung? Does the poet's estimate strike you as an accurate one? Is the general effect of "Homesick Blues" that of a song such as has been described by Hughes? Which particular phrase in this poem is outstandingly poetic?

Compare this poem with Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia," which is a verbal imitation of a jazz band. Contrast the two. Which section of Sandburg's poem is meant to suggest the wailing, lonely "blues"?

9. LINCOLN AND THE POETS

"Young as the nation is, it is being supplied with
the stuff of legends."

Lincoln, the Man of the People	*Edwin Markham* (p. 87)
The Master	*E. A. Robinson* (p. 106)
Anne Rutledge	*E. L. Masters* (p. 113)
A Farmer Remembers Lincoln	*Witter Bynner* (p. 171)
The Lincoln Child	*James Oppenheim* (p. 174)
Lincoln	*John Gould Fletcher* (p. 202)

In this collection are several poems inspired by the life and character of Abraham Lincoln. It is interesting to see how different poets have expressed their veneration for "the great liberator." Why has Lincoln attracted the poets? Have poets written of other great Americans? Name one or two.

Lincoln, the Man of the People............*Markham* (p. 87)

Does the image of the tree suggest certain qualities of Lincoln? What are they? Which passages best bring out the spiritual side of the great President? Which metaphor do you find most memorable? Which one phrase would you select to typify the man?

The Master ....*Robinson* (p. 106)

Why is the title appropriate? What are some of the qualities of Lincoln as "master"? Which is the most telling verse?

Anne Rutledge .... *Masters* (p. 113)

Although this poem is not directly a portrait of Lincoln, he is the central figure. In what way? Do you know the story of Anne Rutledge? What relation does the poet try to establish?

A Farmer Remembers Lincoln.............. *Bynner* (p. 171)

In what ways does this picture of Lincoln differ from that given in "The Master"? Which is the more intimate? the more memorable?

Lincoln.................................. *Fletcher* (p. 202)

Which of the six poems do you like best? Do the poems seem to make a hero of Lincoln in the same way in which old legends treat Arthur and Siegfried? What other actual persons in American history might become legendary and heroic figures? What fictional or imaginary characters might be subjects of poems of American myths? Do you know any legend concerning (a) Paul Bunyan? (b) Johnny Appleseed? (c) Rip Van Winkle?

10. REALMS OF FANTASY

"Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe."

Beclouded	*Emily Dickinson* (p. 60)
Bacchus	*Frank D. Sherman* (p. 92)
Limited	*Carl Sandburg* (p. 155)
Frost on a Window	*Grace H. Conkling* (p. 158)
The Traveler	*Vachel Lindsay* (p. 161)
Old Manuscript	*Alfred Kreymborg* (p. 178)
City Sparrow	*Alfred Kreymborg* (p. 179)
The End of the World	*Archibald MacLeish* (p. 247)
Men	*Dorothy E. Reid* (p. 258)
Collar and Cuffs	*Roberta T. Swartz* (p. 264)

These are all fanciful (though not necessarily fantastic) poems, and all of them are by American poets. Could you make a similar group of poems selected from the British poets?

Which of the poems listed in this section has the lightest note of fantasy? In which does the fanciful element strike deepest? Which seems most minute in observation? Which, if any, has a note of pathos? Which poem suggests a sense of immensity? of mystery?

Select three poems from those listed above. Compare them for (a) their poetic value, (b) their pictorial effectiveness, (c) charm of language, (d) quickness of appeal, (e) disclosure of the author's personality.

Has the "poetry of nonsense" anything in common with these poems? Look up *A Nonsense Anthology* and *A Whimsey Anthology* (both are by Carolyn Wells) and select certain examples for comparison. Has poetry any appeal for you purely on the basis of *sound?*

Compare the poems in this group with whimsical or semi-humorous poems in other collections. Show the relationships. Give preferences and reasons. What writer's *prose* strikes you as (a) the most poetic? (b) the most fantastic? (c) the most like any of the lines in this group?

11. STUDY OF AN INDIVIDUAL POET

"There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any courser like a page
Of prancing poetry."

Many readers are anxious to study an individual poet in detail. This requires a certain amount of research and extra reading, but the results will repay the effort. The method of pursuing such a study is not difficult. One of the simplest ways of going about it is outlined as follows:

Suppose you have chosen Carl Sandburg as the poet whose work you wish to study and report upon. First read that part of the Preface devoted to him and his backgrounds. Then read the introductory note to his group of poems. Mark the salient points. Next, read *all* his poems in this volume and note (a) their similarities, (b) their differences, (c) their reflections of the poet's personality, (d) their view of life in general. Follow this up by reading other poems in Sandburg's own volumes. (In the case of each poet, his most important volumes are listed in the introductory notes. Besides this, many of the publishers have issued *Collected Poems* or *Selected Poems* by the more important writers. Thus you can usually find the most representative poems in one volume.) In regard to Sandburg, his *Selected Poems* contains the following highly characteristic poems, not included in this anthology:

*Chicago
Lost
Onion Days
To a Contemporary Bunkshooter
Prairie
River Roads
Wilderness
Clean Curtains
Aprons of Silence
*Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind
*Losers
The Windy City
Slabs of the Sunburnt West
*Omaha

(Those marked with an * are also included in the revised and enlarged edition of *Modern American Poetry*.)

You are now ready to make your report. It is suggested that, before you write your composition or essay, you make an outline of the important features, such as (1) a brief biography of the poet, (2) his point of view, (3) his outstanding work, (4) your favorite poems, quoting them in part or — if they are short enough — in full, (5) an analysis of one or two of the poems which strike you as most revealing, and (6) a conclusion, summing up the poetry and the author's relation to it.

As suggested in the first paragraph, this same method may be employed in the case of any other poet. It is a little simpler to take such outstanding figures as Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, E. A. Robinson, Vachel Lindsay, Amy Lowell, Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Rudyard Kipling, Walter De la Mare, Rupert Brooke, Humbert Wolfe, Siegfried Sassoon, etc., since the work of all of these can be found easily. But even the less prominent figures will yield surprising results if the student is willing to do a little extra reading. And this, in itself, may well be an adventure.

TEN GENERAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROBLEMS

1. Study the two Prefaces for an idea of the different characteristics of the periods of American poetry since 1830 and of British poetry since 1840. Prepare a condensed summary of either. What seem to be the outstanding differences between modern American and modern British poetry? In spite of the fact that they use the same language, in what way (or ways) are the living American poets unlike their transatlantic fellow-craftsmen?

2. Choose similar topics by American and British poets and bring out (a) the likenesses, (b) the contrasts. For the purpose of this study, it might be well to refer to other anthologies.

3. Study the Foreword and the Preface to *Modern American Poetry* if you are interested in a discussion of the much misunderstood unrhymed, cadenced verse mistakenly called "free." An anthology which is particularly rich in examples of this type of poetry is Harriet Monroe's and Alice Corbin Henderson's *The New Poetry*. Name your favorite writer of *vers libre* and give selections of his or her work. What, if you think so, are the limitations of "free verse"?

4. Do you believe, with the editor, that the background of a poet's life in any way determines his art? Can you see, by a study of the poetry, "how much the gaunt and quiet hills of New Hampshire manifest themselves in the New England soliloquies of Robert Frost, or how the noisy energy of the Middle West booms and rattles through the high-pitched syllables of Vachel Lindsay"? How much has Sandburg's environment influenced his poetry? Emily Dickinson's? Rudyard Kipling's? Langston Hughes'? W. H. Davies'? John Masefield's?

5. Considering the effect of climate and environment, it might be interesting to select a group of poets who have lived in more or less the same section of the country, and compare their work for (a) similarities, (b) differences, (c) personal traits.

6. To make a study of or write an essay on a particular poet the general method as outlined in Suggestion 11 of Part II might be followed. If you wish more personal details, most of the publishers issue pamphlets or booklets describing the authors and their works. You might be interested in collecting data and even photographs — especially if one of the authors happens to be lecturing in your neighborhood.

7. Suppose six American and six British poets were to be selected for an international anthology. Which would you choose? Suppose six native poems were to be chosen from this volume to be translated into French as representative of this country. Which six would you select? Which poem do you think is the most *typically* American poem in this volume? Which the most *typically* English?

8. It is the year 2128. English is still spoken and written. But all trace of our literature has vanished except the one copy of the volume which you hold in your hand. Which three poems would be the most likely to have that "universal appeal" which is not dependent upon time? Which three would be most difficult of comprehension? Which one poem do you think has the greatest chance of permanence a hundred years from now? five hundred?

9. For those who are interested in poetry that records actual events it might be pleasurable (and, incidentally, educational) to make a collection of "Poems of American History." You might begin by compiling such popular pieces as Joaquin Miller's "Columbus," H. W. Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride," J. G. Whittier's "Barbara Frietchie," J. G. Whittier's "Brown of Ossawatomie," Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," O. W. Holmes' "Old Ironsides," etc. Then you might go on collecting the less known historical poems of Bryant, Read, Mellen, Boker, Herman Melville, Bret Harte, Henry Timrod, Walt Whitman, and others.

10. Some readers might like to make their own anthology. This (as any editor can testify) is a simple pastime — especially for those who are fond of making scrapbooks. Time and taste and scissors and paste — and that's what anthologies are made of. Seriously, however, the best way to collect is to use a loose-leaf notebook. Thus you can add new poems or omit old ones from time to time as your taste changes. You can copy poems from this or any other collection, clip verses from the magazines or newspapers — you can even put in some of your own. You may arrange the book chronologically like this one, or divide the poems into groups on the order of the "Suggestions." In a short time you will find that you have a collection that not only reflects your own period, but actually represents you.

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—AND OTHER POEMS I LIKE

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